

ROBERT RAIKES :

FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

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ROBERT RAIKES





Robert Raikes with the poor children.

ROBERT RAIKES

Founder of Sunday Schools

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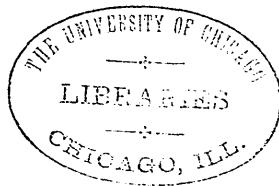
Thomas B. Walters



LONDON:
THE EPWORTH PRESS
J. ALFRED SHARP

BV1518
R2 V12

First Edition, 1930.



H. 107

***Made and Printed in Great Britain by
Gibbs & Bamforth, Ltd., Printers, St. Albans.***

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AUTHORITIES : *Robert Raikes, Journalist and Philanthropist*, by Alfred Gregory (1877) ; *Robert Raikes and Northamptonshire Sunday Schools*, by P. M. Eastman (1880) ; *Memoir of Robert Raikes*, by G. Webster (1873) ; *Sketch of the Life of Robert Raikes*, by W. F. Lloyd (1826) ; *Robert Raikes: the Man and His Work*, by J. Harris, with introduction by Dean Farrar, D.D. ; *Robert Raikes and His Scholars*, by Mrs. H. B. Paull ; *Historical and Biographical Account of Robert Raikes*, by John Taylor ; *A Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, by Wm. H. Groser ; *The Gentleman's Magazine* ; *The European Magazine* ; *The Dictionary of National Biography* ; *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* ; *The Census of Education*, by Horace Mann (1851) ; *The Sunday School Repository* ; *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* ; *The National Cyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge* ; *Cassell's Illustrated History of England* ; *The National Sunday School Union Report* for 1928 ; and various other histories, encyclopaedias, biographical dictionaries, and works of reference as well as letters and other communications from private individuals.

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CHAPTER I

SOCIAL DEGRADATION OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

IN order to form any adequate conception of the vast amount of good that Sunday Schools have done, it is necessary to know something of the shockingly debased state of the people of this country at the time of their foundation—that is, in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

‘The whole nation, with some few bright exceptions,’ says Cassell’s *Illustrated History of England*, ‘lay in the most deplorable condition of moral and religious destitution possible. The government had ceased to interest itself in almost everything except foreign wars and official corruption; the people at large were left totally without education or moral training; the clergy were become worldly, bitter, and persecuting, and indifferent to, or incapable of, their proper religious duties; the literature of the country was tainted by the most repulsive grossness and sensuality; and, in short, the

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whole land lay one frightful scene of mental poverty and abjectness.

‘We have quoted the words of Burnet—Bishop Gilbert Burnet, a prominent prelate and historian—those of Atterbury, a high Tory, were quite as strong . . . Dr. Calamy, a great Nonconformist, equally complains that the “decay of real religion, both in and out of the church,” was most visible. . . .

‘It was at this era of darkness, depravity, ignorance, and crime, that John and Charles Wesley, and George Whitefield, came forward to preach a revival, and laid the foundation of Methodism—one of the most extraordinary instruments of religious, moral, and social regeneration which has appeared in any age of the world, and which not only stands as the far greatest fact of this particular period, but has operated in the great mass of the people an unparalleled life and elevation of mind and character, such as it is difficult to comprehend or calculate, and of which there are few who are fully aware.’

As late as 1780, eleven years before John Wesley’s death, things were still in great need of improvement. ‘Education, either in town or country, was scarcely known. . . . There was not a school in all the swarming region of Whitechapel, and many another equally poor

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and populous region of London, much less in country towns and agricultural parishes. It was a settled maxim amongst the landed gentry, that education, even of the most elementary kind, would totally destroy the supply of servants. The charity schools throughout the country were monopolized by the landlords of the different parishes and the clergy, and the ample revenues for education embezzled by them ! In some such schools there was not a single scholar ; in others, as at Pocklington, in Yorkshire, the free grammar school, with an endowment of one thousand pounds a year, had only one scholar ; this one has informed us that he received next to no education. This state of physical and moral destitution was made the more dreary by the equally low state of religion.'

Drunkenness and vice of all kinds were rampant, and we are further told that ' everything which could imbrute the people was encouraged by the aristocracy, on the plea that it made them good soldiers.'

To alter this disgraceful state of things the Sunday School was founded, and truly amazing was the good result almost immediately produced. Horace Mann, in his work, *The Census of Education* (1851) wrote :

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'We perceive, indeed, the great improvement which has taken place within the last half-century in the manners of the people, their growing attachment to the cause of order and sobriety; and the contrast of our land in this respect with other countries often furnishes theme for gratulation; but the share which Sunday Schools have taken in effecting this desirable result is probably to a great extent unrecognized. And yet the constant action on the minds of the youthful population of more than 250,000 of religious teachers, not removed in general by age or sex from sympathy with their companions—each, too, having such a limited number of scholars as to make the influence direct and personal—must needs be working silently a great result.'

Undeniably, popular education was almost entirely due to the foundation of Sunday Schools, and in the nineteenth century—that following the awful period which we have described—'*Sunday Schools were first in the educational race.*' 'The same awakened sense of neighbourly responsibility, which thus produced the Sunday School, soon after gave a mighty impulse to the work of daily education.'

All credit, therefore, to those who in-

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augurated the Sunday School, and, in particular, to the man who, before all others, gave it the direct spur and is entitled, as all authorities agree, to be called the Founder of Sunday Schools—ROBERT RAIKES.

He was born in the city of Gloucester on September 14, 1735, the same year in which the two Wesleys went to America and eight years after the accession of George II. to the throne of England. His father, also named Robert, was the printer and proprietor of the *Gloucester Journal*, his mother was the daughter of a clergyman, the Rev. Richard Drew. The father's father, yet another Robert, was likewise a clergyman, at Holderness, in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The house in which Raikes was born is the cathedral organist's house in Miller's Green, formerly called Palace Yard, in the close and 'under the shadow of the grand cathedral.' It was occupied many years at a later period, strangely enough, by the eminent musical composer and organist, Dr. Samuel Sebastian Wesley.

Let us lament, with Mr. Alfred Gregory, one of Raikes's best biographers, that the house bears 'no indication of its association with him'—is not marked even by a memorial tablet.

CHAPTER II

RAIKES'S EARLY LIFE AND MARRIAGE

THE elder Raikes had founded the *Gloucester Journal*, the first number of which appeared on April 9, 1722. Still published, it is one of the oldest county newspapers, and at the time of its establishment was the ninth in order of time of any provincial paper. In size it was scarcely larger than a sheet of foolscap. Always a bold advocate of justice and reform, it became embroiled with the House of Commons in 1728 through publishing a report of certain Parliamentary proceedings, which at that period newspapers were not allowed to report. Robert Raikes, senior, as the editor and proprietor, was cited to appear before the Bar of the House of Commons on April 8, 1728, to answer to the charge of breach of privilege. He went, was reprimanded by the Speaker, and had to pay the fees.

In the following year, the paper offended again in like manner, and once more the proprietor was summoned to appear before the Bar. This time, however, Mr. Raikes did

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not attend, but sent a letter pleading illness and inability to travel, and putting forward the defence that the matter in question had been published by an assistant without his knowledge and in disregard of an injunction he had laid down that Parliamentary reports were not to appear. His excuse was accepted, and the affair was closed.

The Rev. George Whitefield, at first closely associated with John Wesley, was born on December 16, 1718, in Gloucester city, where his parents kept an inn. He is stated to have sent various literary compositions to the *Gloucester Journal* before he was admitted a servitor of Pembroke College in 1733.

Robert Raikes, the elder, died on September 7, 1757, leaving his printing business in a prosperous condition. This, with the proprietorship of the equally successful *Gloucester Journal*, passed to his son Robert, the subject of our biography, who was now in his twenty-second year, and had already been some time engaged in his father's employ.

Another son, Thomas, became a prominent Russian merchant in London and eventually a director of the Bank of England, while a third son, Richard, some time later entered upon a clerical life, and became an M.A. and a Fellow at St. John's College, Cambridge.

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He held the perpetual incumbency of Maise-more, a village two miles from Gloucester, and also the appointments of Treasurer and Canon of St. David's, with that of Prebendary of Hereford.

Of the younger Robert Raikes's early days nothing certain is known. Some believe that he finished his education at Cambridge, but this is doubtful. Anyhow, he speedily displayed great aptitude for business, and under his control the *Gloucester Journal* prospered equally as well as when under his father's, if not more so. Before long, he became a member of the Court of Assistants of the Stationers Company in London. A man of the highest moral qualities, he speedily also became distinguished in his native city for his humanitarian and benevolent activities.

The premises where he carried on business are still to be seen in Southgate Street, one of the leading thoroughfares of Gloucester. It is No. 38, and was described by Gregory who worked there, I believe, as a 'quaint and roomy old house, with gable ends, the upper storeys projecting and the front faced with stout oak timbers.' It was afterwards occupied by wine merchants. Raikes lived there for some years, as well as editing and publishing his paper there.

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Although at the time lampoons and scurrility were all the fashion, Robert Raikes would not tolerate any personal abuse in the columns of his journal, which confined itself to a truthful and impartial report of the news of the day and the setting forth in sorrowful, rather than heated, language of all crying evils—particularly the evils of drink, idleness, and sinful folly.

For instance, in narrating the case, say, of some unfortunate young man, little more than a boy, who had been transported beyond the seas for a term of ten years for some petty theft or for poaching, he would point a double moral by asking whether the culprit could consider that it paid to commit crime and not to be orderly and well-behaved, as also whether such punishment was not excessive for the offence committed.

Nevertheless, there were no leading articles such as we are accustomed to to-day.

In 1787, ten years after he had succeeded to his father's business, he married Anne, the only daughter of Thomas Trigge, of Newnham, a town ten miles south-west of Gloucester. The bride was sister to Sir Thomas Trigge and Rear-Admiral John Trigge, so that the family was plainly one of considerable importance in the neighbourhood; and the

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marriage, which took place at St. James's Church, London, shows that the bridegroom was already held in high esteem and occupied an honoured position in his native city.

His wife has been described as 'a lady of a pious and benevolent disposition, with an active and well-cultivated mind and a heart open as day to melting charity.' Madame D'Arblay (*née* Frances Burney), of whom we shall have more to say later, called her 'a quiet and unpretending woman.'

CHAPTER III.

AWFUL STATE OF THE PRISONS.

THE state of the gaols throughout the land at the time of which we are writing was a scandal to any civilized country. As early as 1702—thirty-three years before Robert Raikes was born and the first year of Queen Anne's reign—an ineffective effort had been made to bring about a reform of the London prisons by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, Dr. Bray and other members of the society visiting and reporting upon them. In 1728, General James Oglethorpe, M.P., 'driven by strong benevolence of soul,' forced a Parliamentary inquiry under his own personal direction, and revealed 'an amazing scene of horrors.' A picture by Hogarth of Oglethorpe's Commission is in the National Gallery.

This Commission indicted Bambridge, the warden of the Fleet Prison, Huggins (his predecessor in that office), a turnkey named Barnes, and Acton, head warden of the Marshalsea Prison, for '*gross murders*,' but the scoundrels '*were acquitted by infamous*

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judges.' Nevertheless, some amendments were introduced into gaol administration, but the chief vices of the system were suffered to continue.

The noble-hearted John Howard, the famous prison reformer, had not yet come forward, to arouse widespread public indignation, at the time when Robert Raikes succeeded his father in the proprietorship of the *Gloucester Journal*. But from the hour he took over the control of that paper, Raikes again and again called attention in his columns to the disgraceful and inhuman conditions prevailing in the local prisons. He did more—he paid money out of his own pocket and opened a fund for public subscriptions to help the hapless inmates, as well as took other measures, as we shall see, for the amelioration of their lot.

There were two gaols in Gloucester—one for the city itself and one for the county. The county gaol consisted of part of the ancient castle of Gloucester—a fortress dating back to the period of William the Conqueror. 'Simply horrible' were the conditions of the unfortunate poor wretches incarcerated there. There was only one day-room for both the male and female felons, and *it barely measured twelve feet by eleven!* Between forty and

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sixty prisoners were lodged together daily in this room, there being no court for exercise. Debtors—or poor persons sent to gaol because they could not pay their debts and for no other offence—were kept separate, it is true, from the felons or criminals but had to live all together, like cattle, in a room measuring only fourteen feet by eleven—a room, more fitly described as ‘a den,’ *without any windows and ventilated only by a hole broken in the plaster wall!*

At night the male felons were shut up all together in a close dark room, known as ‘the main,’ in the upper part of the building. The floor of this compartment was ‘so ruinous that it could not be washed.’ One can imagine the frightful scenes—the brawling and free fights—which would take place in such a den of iniquity, seeing that the warders or turnkeys were often too indifferent or too *frightened* to enter and attempt to check any such disorder.

There were no sanitary arrangements whatsoever, and the filth everywhere, the stuffiness and lack of ventilation produced awful disease, particularly ‘gaol fever,’ from which there were frequent deaths—as *many as twelve in a month*, we are told.

But worse is to be related. There was no

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allowance or provision made for the support of the debtors ; *they were given no food*, or any money with which to buy food. They were supposed to provide for themselves—poor creatures sent there because they had not the money with which to pay their debts ! Unless they were able to pay for beds, or had beds sent in to them by friends, they had to sleep on straw laid on the bare floor, which was as often stone as wood. In fact it is alleged that in many prisons even the straw had to be paid for by the prisoners, or they got none ; and how often the straw was changed, goodness only can say, for, in 1774 John Howard testified that in one prison the gaoler only paid £1 a year for the supply of the straw.

As regarded clothing, the wretched debtors had to provide that also or obtain it through charity, or—go naked. The filth, starvation, cruelty, and disease prevalent in all our prisons at that period were truly appalling, and ‘ were enough to shock even the tough conscience of the eighteenth century,’ when Raikes, Howard, Oglethorpe, and other noble spirits exposed the abuses.

Will it be believed that the felons or criminals, who were far less deserving of sympathy than the poor debtors, were much

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better treated, being considered as it were the *protégés* of the State? *They* were allowed a sixpenny loaf every two days, and were provided with clothing. It is also said that they were given beds, but John Howard in 1774 averred that 'such a luxury as a bed was unknown in any prison,' unless paid for by prisoners.

As Robert Raikes pointed out, in one of his appeals for public charity for the poor debtors in the Gloucester gaols, some of these wretches would actually have died of starvation *had it not been for the humanity of the felons who gave up part of their rations to feed them!*

All prisoners, felon and debtor alike, were at the absolute mercy of their gaolers, against whose conduct there was no hope of redress or even appeal. Tyranny and cruelty, therefore, were rife in their worst forms, for everything depended on the type of man the turnkey, and more especially the head gaoler, was. We have seen that in 1728-9, the Parliamentary Commission inquiring into prison abuses caused at least four gaolers to be tried for murder and that all four were acquitted.

The gaoler of Gloucester County Prison, as a matter of fact, *received no salary!* And

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nowhere in all the land at the time was any prison staff paid. Every gaoler and his subordinate turnkeys depended wholly and solely for their livelihood on fees exacted from their prisoners! Will such a thing be credited in this enlightened twentieth century?

But it is an absolute fact. These fees had to be paid by even innocent prisoners—that is, prisoners who were acquitted of the charges brought against them—before the gaolers would permit them to go free. This horrified the great and good John Howard and made him take up prison reform.

Unscrupulous and rapacious gaolers, therefore—and the majority of them were *most* unscrupulous and rapacious—lost no opportunity of wringing money in every conceivable way out of their helpless prisoners and recompensing themselves by hook or crook.

They succeeded so well, and so highly remunerative was the position of gaoler, that many of them actually paid so much a year to the sheriff for the situation! The gaoler of Gloucester Prison paid the sheriff £4 14s. yearly for his office, and of course he received no salary. £4 14s. a year may not seem very much to-day, but money was worth more in those days, and in any case it shows that the position was considered by a certain type of

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man—a very low type it must be said—as well worth having.

The very lowness of that annual payment shows, too, that no one of any standing, sought the situation ; otherwise the charge by the sheriff would have been much higher.

CHAPTER IV

RAIKES AND THE PRISONS

THE conditions prevailing in the City Gaol of Gloucester were, however, somewhat better than in the County Gaol, according to one of my authorities, Mr. Alfred Gregory, who was employed on the *Gloucester Journal* and published a life of Robert Raikes in 1877, compiled from special family information and other original sources. There was no court for the prisoners to take exercise in, but they were permitted to walk on the leads or roof, and so get fresh air. Moreover, the debtors here received 3s. a week as maintenance money, and three-pennyworth of bread per day, with 'garnish.'

This word 'garnish' brings me to another terrible abuse or scandal of those old-time prisons. 'Garnish' was a fee—money—paid by a prisoner, whether a felon or a debtor, on his first entering the prison walls in order to provide drink for all his fellow-prisoners. If he had not got it to pay, the more brutal and drink-loving of his fellow-prisoners would beat and otherwise ill-treat him. The gaoler, too,

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looked to such 'garnish' to put money in *his* pocket, for *he* provided the beer or drink, for a consideration.

Fancy intoxicating liquors being sold by a head gaoler to his prisoners! But it was the invariable and openly recognized thing at that period.

Who can wonder therefore that drunkenness and all manner of vice were practised in those prisons, making them veritable 'hells on earth'? In such dens of infamy, the prisoner was not reformed—his reform indeed was not really sought—but brutalized and made far worse.

Finally, let me say, that so careless was the control or guard maintained over the prisoners, that they were continually escaping. Some of those who escaped must, we feel sure, have broken gaol in horror and desperation at their terrible surroundings; and so there is a hope that their experience was a lesson which they never forgot and which made them amend their ways, if it were a criminal offence that had caused them to be sent there. This disgraceful practice of 'garnish' was not prohibited until the reign of George IV.

Robert Raikes sent money, food, and clothing regularly to the poor debtors of the County Gaol and also solicited aid for them

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in his paper and amongst his friends. Furthermore, he frequently visited the inmates of both gaols and did his best to help them in other ways ; for his ' withers were wrung ' by their sufferings.

It was in 1768 that the following famous appeal by him appeared in his journal :

' The prisoners, confined in the castle, without allowance and without the means of subsistence by labour, most humbly entreat some little assistance from those who can pity their wretchedness.'

After stating, as already referred to, that were it not for ' the humanity of the felons ' who gave them part of their allowance, some of the poor debtors would have been starved, as the fund at the *Gloucester Journal's* office was almost exhausted and was insufficient to meet the calls upon it, he went on to say :

' The boilings of pots or sweepings of pantries would be well bestowed on these poor wretches,' and he related that one Sunday—probably the previous Sunday—a gentleman (himself, without question of a doubt) found that several of the poor debtors '*had not tasted food for two or three days before.*'

Raikes has been accused by certain would-be detractors of being vain and fond of praise, but a sufficient answer to this charge, is the fact that he did not at any time attach his

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name to these appeals, and that he never claimed any credit for what he did, but readily and unstintingly gave credit to all who collaborated or co-operated with him in his good works.

Not merely did he provide the imprisoned debtors with the necessities of life, he supplied them, and the felons also, with good books—at least those who were able to read ; and alas ! the number must have been very small. He also tried to find *occupations* for them, and lost no opportunity either, of instilling them with noble and elevating ideas, or giving them moral and religious instruction. He would speak to them personally on the folly and dreadful results of drunkenness, gambling, swearing, vile language, and other evil habits.

Whenever he found one of them able to read, he would induce such an one to instruct his fellow-prisoners by reading aloud to them, paying the man money to do so, and procuring him what indulgences he might from the gaoler.

Well might he be styled even at this time, as he was later, ' the father of the poor,' by his friend, the Rev. Dr. Samuel Glasse, a popular and eloquent preacher and a distinguished theologian, who wrote an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, January, 1788,

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entitled 'A Short Sketch and Character of Mr. Raikes.'

Let us not forget, either, that Robert Raikes ran the risk of contracting the fearfully infectious 'gaol fever'—a virulent form of typhus—every time he visited the hapless prisoners.

In 1773, John Howard started his crusade against prison abuses, and, among other places, visited Gloucester, to inspect its two gaols. Of course the two noble-hearted men met. They were bound to do so in the circumstances, and Robert Raikes entertained Howard to dinner at his house. Howard afterwards wrote, 'Mr. Raikes continues his unremitting attentions to the prisoners,' and spoke most highly of him and the good work he had done.

But now, thanks to Howard's almost fierce crusade, Robert Raikes had no longer any great need to appeal for help as regarded the prisoners. He 'warmly supported' Howard's and Sir George Paul's schemes for the reformation of the gaol system, and in 1774 two Bills, introduced by a Mr. Popham, and so known as 'Popham's Bills,' were rushed through Parliament to satisfy the popular indignation aroused by Howard's exposure of the terrible abuses.

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By the first Bill, all gaolers' fees were abolished, and it was ordered that all prisoners against whom a grand jury failed to find a true bill should be liberated promptly, free of all charges, the gaoler being recompensed from the county rate. The second Bill decreed that justices of the peace everywhere be required by law to see that the walls and ceilings of all gaols within their jurisdiction were scraped and whitewashed at least once a year ; that all rooms be regularly cleaned out and properly ventilated ; that infirmaries be provided for the sick and medical attention be given ; that all prisoners be clothed at the expense of the county ; and that, generally, every measure tending to restore or maintain the health of prisoners should be taken by all prison authorities. How Raikes must have rejoiced at the passing of these Bills !

Gloucester Castle was handed over by the crown in 1784 to the county of Gloucester, and a few years later a new county gaol was erected on the site, consisting of a penitentiary, bridewell, and sheriff's prison on new and improved lines.

To emphasize our statement of the risk incurred by Robert Raikes in visiting the gaols, we would add that the brave Howard was carried off by ' gaol-fever ' in 1790.

CHAPTER V

THE ORIGIN OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

ONE pleasant afternoon, probably a Saturday, in the early part of the year 1780, Robert Raikes had occasion, as he himself tells us in one of his letters, to go to a slummy suburb of Gloucester bordering on what was called St. Catherine's Meadows. He went to interview a man whom he thought of employing as a gardener.

In our mind's eye, we picture him as he walked thither, a somewhat portly, dignified-looking gentleman, above medium height and in the prime of life—in his forty-fourth year. He was dressed in the fashion of the day, in a long-skirted blue coat, the high, deeply-turned-over collar of which almost touched the lobes of his ears ; a buff waistcoat ; drab kerseymere breeches buckled below the knee, white stockings, and low buckle shoes. Upon his head, surmounted by the three-cornered hat then universally worn, was a brown wig, frizzed and very full over the ears.

He did not carry a sword, as most gentlemen

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did at the time as a necessary protection against footpads, but a tasselled cane, with which he tapped the ground with a rolling, and rather swagger-like, circular sweep of the arm from time to time.

His face was roundish, of a fair or rubicund complexion, and beaming with benevolence, the eyes being kindly but thoughtful and far-seeing in expression, and the mouth exceedingly gentle and sweet-looking. The chin, was as softly rounded as a woman's; the nose was prominent, large, and very big at the tip. 'Give me a man with a nose,' Napoleon used to say,—meaning a large and prominent one, as typifying vigour and energy.

The man Raikes went to see happened to be out, but was expected home every moment, so he determined to wait about in the hope of seeing him.

In front of the cottages, and on the meadows they faced, swarms of little ragamuffins of all ages and both sexes were romping, the bigger boys and even girls, for the most part, as one can imagine, indulging in the roughest horse-play. But what particularly horrified Raikes was the awful language these small children employed towards one another even in their play and the sight of many of them wrangling savagely over gambling games such as

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‘chuck’ or ‘chuck-farthing.’ The young pagans swore at one another and used the vilest of language—expressions and words which they were too young to know the meaning of, and which they must have picked up from evil elder companions, or, alas, from wicked, coarse parents.

St. Catherine’s Meadows are not built on even at this day. They probably never will be, as they are too much subject to flooding after heavy rain.*

A woman, of rather more decent appearance than most of the residents of that quarter, came out of her door, and Robert Raikes turned to her and remarked how terribly sad it was to see such small children behaving like so many savages.

He very likely drew forth his snuff-box, as he spoke to her, and took a prodigious pinch of snuff; for, like most other gentlemen of the period, he was a great snuff-taker, and we are told he used ‘to snuff with elegance’—that is, take a pinch from his box with a grand or dandified air. As a rule, he used a horn snuff-box, but he had ‘a large massive gold box for dress occasions.’

‘Ah, sir,’ replied the woman, ‘this is nothing to what goes on on Sundays. You’d

* I believe St. Catherine’s Meadows are now being filled up with builder’s rubble.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT

be shocked indeed if you were here then. *It is simply hell upon earth : we cannot read the Bible in peace for them. We have a worthy clergyman, the Rev. Thomas Stock, who has put some of the children to school during the week, but on the Sabbath they run riot.*'

She went on to explain that nearly all the children of the neighbourhood were employed along with their parents and older brothers and sisters, in a pin factory near by—even children not yet in their teens were thus employed—and, as Sunday was their only day of recreation, they behaved then in a most unrestrained way.

Robert Raikes returned home, shaken to the core and thinking deeply. He knew that the gambling, swearing children he had seen were as an historian tells us ' no unfavourable example of young England then ' ; he knew also that the degrading spectacle was due to ignorance and bad associations, ignorance in particular ; and good, benevolent man as he was, he racked his brain for a solution of the problem—how he might in some measure at least cure the evil in his own neighbourhood.

As pointed out in the beginning of our first chapter, the education of the children of the poor at that date was wholly neglected ;

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there were absolutely no schools at all for them. 'The national duty of universal education was not fully recognized in England until fifty years later,' writes Theodore Gerald Soares under 'Sunday Schools' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*. 'In the eighteenth century education was the privilege of the well-to-do, and even many of the benefactions which had been provided from time to time for the education of poor children had become almost universally devoted to the children of the middle classes. Moreover, through the development of the factory system children were forced into labour at a very early age, with the result that they grew up in hopeless illiteracy.'

Utterly ignorant in every respect, unable to read or write and with no knowledge of figures, the lower classes in England at that era were on no higher level than savages—were no better socially or morally, if as good, as the South Sea Islanders or the natives of Central Africa when these were first encountered by European explorers.

The idea of founding a Sunday School must have almost immediately occurred to Robert Raikes, for such institutions, although by no means widespread or general, had long been known. Amongst the early Christians there

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had been catechetical schools for the preparation of converts from paganism 'for Church-membership, and the instruction of the young and ignorant in the knowledge of God and of Salvation.' The scholars committed passages of Scripture to memory, and their books comprised parts of the Bible in verse, Jewish antiquities, sacred poems, and dialogues.

Martin Luther, too, had established similar schools in 1520, and the custom had spread wherever the Reformation obtained a foothold, Knox opening Sunday Schools in Scotland some forty years later. On the Continent, in the Roman Catholic Church, St. Charles Borromeo, nephew of Pope Pius V. and Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, started in his diocese at the same period as Knox a system of schools which continues to this day; and at the end of the seventeenth century the Venerable Jean Baptiste de la Salle founded a Sunday School or *école dominicale* at St. Sulpice, France.

In fact, just prior to Robert Raikes, there had been several Sunday Schools established in various places. The Rev. Joseph Alleine (b. 1634—d. 1668), known as 'the Puritan Father,' and the author of a book entitled *An Alarm to the Unconverted*, was in the habit of drawing young pupils together for

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instruction on the Sunday, at Bath, about 1650 ; there was a Sunday School at Roxbury, Massachusetts, America, in 1674, and Bishop Wilson established Sunday Schools in the Isle of Man in 1703. In Raikes's own native county of Gloucestershire, a Mrs. Catherine Boevey, of Flaxley Abbey, prior to her decease in 1726, entertained six poor children at her own house every Sunday—different children by turn—providing them with a good dinner and hearing them say the Catechism. There is a monument to her in Flaxley Church.

The great John Wesley held Sunday classes at Savannah, America, in 1737 ; and, among the German Seventh-Day Baptists, Ludwig Hacker ran a similar school from 1740 to 1747 at Ephrata, Lancaster, in Pennsylvania, America. In 1763-4, a Miss Catherine Harrison (afterwards known as Mrs. Cappe) of Bedale, Yorkshire, gave instruction to poor children first in her own kitchen, and then established a Sunday School in conjunction with the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey at Catterick in the same county. At High Wycombe, Wesley's friend, Hannah Ball, started a Sunday School in 1769 ; Dr. Kennedy one in Bright parish, County Down, Ireland, about 1770 ; Mr. Jenkin Morgan one near Llanidloes, Wales, in 1771 ; and the Rev. David Simpson

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another at Macclesfield, Cheshire, in 1778—only two years before Robert Raikes thought of opening his.

I must not forget to mention that John Twining, who lived in Gloucester City itself, also had a Sunday School about this period, and that there was one at Little Lever, near Bolton, in Lancashire, taught by an old man named James Hey or Heys, a Presbyterian, who went among his neighbours by the name of 'Owd Jemmy o' th' Hey' and on weekdays earned a livelihood by winding bobbins for weavers. 'Owd Jemmy' was paid to teach the Sunday School by a wealthy paper-maker named Adam Crompton, and called his pupils around him, not by ringing a bell, but by beating together an old brass pestle and mortar.

Robert Raikes, therefore, was not the originator of the Sunday School. As Alfred Gregory neatly puts it in his biography, 'Raikes's distinctive honour lies in the fact that, having in common with several other kindred spirits perceived the advantages that would attend Sunday teaching, he did not content himself as did others with establishing a school or schools in his own neighbourhood, but by means of his newspaper and other organs of public opinion he recommended the

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practice far and wide and never ceased his advocacy till the scheme was generally adopted throughout the land. . . . From cottager to king, all learned of the new institution through Robert Raikes. He raised Sunday teaching from a fortuitous rarity into a universal system. He found the practice local, he made it national.' As another authority expresses it, 'his name is mainly remembered as a practical propounder of the Sunday School system.'

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, under 'Education,' states, 'Nevertheless, in virtue of his achievement in organization, Raikes is rightly regarded as the founder of the English Sunday School.'

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST FOUR SCHOOLS OPENED

SOME cynics, we are told by the *Dictionary of National Biography*, afterwards asserted that Raikes made up his newspaper on Sundays and was annoyed by the interruption of noisy children outside in the streets when he was reading his proofs. This was, of course, only a cheap and most undeserved sneer. He knew, as his biographer, Webster, points out, that the minds of children are more susceptible to impressions than when they are grown up, and that it is in childhood good seed may be most easily sown.

Mr. Joseph Lancaster, of whom we shall have to speak more fully later, is responsible for the story that, as Robert Raikes passed the pin-factory in which the older brothers and sisters of the poor children whom he had seen on St. Catherine's Meadows were employed, the thought '*Try, at any rate, to reclaim these poor children,*' occurred to him, and that he never passed the place—the pin-factory—in future years '*without his lifting*

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up his hands and heart to God in thankfulness and praise.'

It has also been alleged that he first got the hint for a Sunday School from a Dissenter named William King, who was a woollen cardmaker of Dursley, a town some fourteen miles south-west of Gloucester and in the same county. King, it would seem, had set up such a school at Dursley some little time before, but could not carry it on for lack of assistance. He called upon Robert Raikes, knowing the latter's high repute for benevolent and charitable works, and, after being entertained to dinner, on propounding his scheme for a Sunday School, invited his host to accompany him to 'the Island'—a district that must not be confused with Alney Island, which divides the River Severn into two channels about a mile below the city.

Still called 'the Island' it was reached by a bridge at the lower end of Westgate Street, just where this street joins what is now Priory Road. There was a toll house at which a toll of a farthing had to be paid to cross the bridge, and so the bridge became known as Farthing Bridge, which name was corrupted into *Foreign* Bridge. The spot was thus known within the memory of the older generation, although the bridge itself had

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disappeared long before. The Westgate Bridge is now the only one leading to Alney Island, which is a tract of land many acres in extent.

'Foreign Bridge' is marked on a plan of Gloucester dated 1885. A road has since been built over it, and when excavations were being made near the place a few years ago part of the bridge was exposed.

Yet another authority, however, asserts that in Robert Raikes's time the bridge leading to 'The Island' was called the *Fording* Bridge because waggons and horses took people across when there were floods.

It was on a Sunday and 'The Island' was one of the slummiest parts of Gloucester. The drunkenness and profligacy they witnessed can be well imagined. A writer exactly over a hundred years later spoke of St. Giles' and Drury Lane, London—the scenes and sights therein—thus, and that description may be taken as a fair specimen of what Robert Raikes and William King beheld on their walk :

'Women with scarcely the articles of apparel which common decency requires, with forms bloated with disease, and faces rendered hideous by habitual drunkenness—men reeling and staggering along—children in rags and

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filth—whole streets of squalid and miserable appearance, whose inhabitants are lounging in the public road, fighting, screaming, and swearing—these are the common objects which present themselves.’

On ‘The Island’ itself all sorts of low amusements, such as dog and cock fighting, and pugilistic encounters with the naked fist, as well as gambling, were being indulged in, amid a riot of disorder and clamour.

‘What a pity it is—what a shame to our country—that the Sabbath should be so desecrated!’ Raikes is said to have exclaimed.

‘The only way to remedy it,’ King, it is averred, replied, ‘is for you to open a Sunday School, as I have at Dursley.’ Raikes is supposed to have answered that he was afraid that, if it became known that the idea originated from Dissenters, the Established Church would refuse to take it up. King was a follower of George Whitefield.

Whatever truth there is in this account, it is highly probable that Raikes and King did take such a walk and engage in such conversation. But, as the author thinks, Raikes had already decided to open several Sunday Schools and specially invited King to his house so as to learn something from his experience. Certain it is, that shortly after-

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ward, Raikes met the Rev. Thomas Stock, who had started a Sunday School at Ashbury, a parish on the Wiltshire border of Berks.

Stock was a much younger man than Raikes, having been born in 1749. He had been educated at Oxford, where he was an M.A. and Fellow of Pembroke College. At this time, however, he was head master of the St. Catherine's parish grammar school at Gloucester, and curate of St. John the Baptist church.

The pair met casually, and quite by accident, in Hare Lane.

Chatting together, Raikes proposed that Mr. Stock should aid him in founding at least four Sunday Schools round about, Stock agreed whole-heartedly to do so ; and the upshot of what passed between them was that they forthwith engaged four respectable, God-fearing women to undertake the teaching of four such schools, comprising in all ninety children.

CHAPTER VII

‘BOBBY WILD GOOSE!’

THE first school opened was in St. Catherine's Street, in the parish of the same name, and near St. Catherine's Meadows; and the woman given charge of the school was a Mrs. King. The second school stood at the corner of Grey Friars and Southgate Street, in the parish of St. Mary de Crypt,—Raikes's own parish—and was taught by a Mrs. Sarah Critchley, who lived next door to the premises. A third school was at the back of the premises of 103, Northgate Street, in Mr. Stock's parish of St. John the Baptist.

As both Robert Raikes and the Rev. Thomas Stock recognized that ignorance was at the bottom of the terrible evil they were setting forth to cure, they saw that it was necessary to unite ordinary elementary education with religious instruction, as Borromeo and La Salle had done in Italy and France.

The children had to be taught their letters before they could be expected to imbibe the great fundamental truths of Christianity, as well as other moral training. Robert Raikes

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and Mr. Stock were out to fit the children of the poor in every way for the battle of life—to raise and elevate them by giving them a sound, elementary education.

This fact may rather astonish people who have only heard of the Sunday School as it exists to-day, when the necessity for providing the pupils with secular education has long passed away and the instruction given is entirely religious.

No doubt, many of these will be further surprised to learn that Robert Raikes’s first Sunday School began at ten o’clock in the morning, that the children stayed until mid-day, then were dismissed for dinner, and returned at one o’clock, when after reading a lesson, they were conducted to church. After divine service, they went back with their teacher to the school and repeated the Catechism until half-past five. They were then sent home, being strictly cautioned or advised not to play in the streets on the way, but to conduct themselves quietly and decorously, so as to respect and honour the Lord’s Day.

The four women who controlled these four preliminary schools were paid 1s. 6d. weekly for their services, Raikes paying the shilling and the Rev. Thomas Stock the sixpence.

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Mr. Stock drew up the rules that were to be observed, and went the round of all the four schools every Sunday afternoon, to catechize and examine the children. Raikes, after the formation of the second school—that in his own parish of St. Mary de Crypt—is stated to have confined his attention almost exclusively to it.

Actually, the first school opened in Raikes's own parish was in Soot Alley, but the premises there were very inadequate and undesirable, and very shortly the teacher, Mrs. Critchley, and her pupils were moved to Grey Friars Street.

Mrs. King taught the St. Catherine's Street school for three years, when she died ; whereupon her husband took it over and carried it on for many years. He lived to the age of eighty. This first little Sunday School was held in a mean private house, like a back-street huckster-shop, of two floors, opening directly off the foot-walk, with only a single room in front and another above it, each lighted by a flat window, much wider than high. There was a side entrance to a yard alongside. The place now bears a memorial tablet, and was presented to the city by Sir James Bruton in 1919.

A Mrs. Roberts taught the third school at

' BOBBY WILD GOOSE ! '

103, Northgate Street ; and the fourth school opened was in Oxbody Lane, under a Mrs. Brabant.

Soon afterwards the Rev. Thomas Stock started a fifth Sunday School in St. Aldate's Square, with the help of Mr. Trickey, the sexton of St. Aldate's parish, and then Mr. Raikes opened two more, one in Hare Lane and one in Deacon Street.

The first four schools were *for boys only*. Girls were not admitted until later. Robert Raikes was particularly fond of small boys, and would tap those he met under the chin with his forefinger, remarking, with an ingratiating smile, ' That is a nice little boy.'

Mrs. Critchley's permanent school almost directly faced St. Mary de Crypt church ; and Mr. Raikes soon became known, according to local tradition, as ' Bobby Wild Goose,' because of his activities to promote his Sunday Schools. The neighbours used to smile and call to one another, ' There goes Bobby Wild Goose and his ragged regiment,' when he marched at the head of his scholars to church.

For all his kind nature he would stand no nonsense from any turbulent youngster, and did not hesitate to administer a severe caning to such when softer measures proved of no avail.

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On the opening of his first school, he devoted the ensuing week to going round among the poor people of the parish, and urging them to send their children. Many of them replied that they were too poverty-stricken to fit the children out with suitable clothing, but, as he himself tells us in one of his letters, he met this objection with the retort that if the clothing the children wore was fit for the street it would be fit enough for them to come in to his schools. He said that he did not mind what rags they came in, so long as they came with 'clean faces, clean hands, and their hair combed.'

CHAPTER VIII

WHY 'SUNDAY' SCHOOLS?

It can well be understood, that in spite of the terribly debased state of the poor in England everywhere at the time, Robert Raikes and the Rev. Thomas Stock easily found sufficient parents, or at least mothers, to see the benefits that would accrue to their children by sending these to the four schools opened.

Girls and boys were soon alike eligible, and it did not matter in what awful rags they came. We can well believe, though, that Robert Raikes did not long allow them to wear such rags but fitted them out in better clothing, as he had done in the case of the poor debtors in the Gloucester gaols, as also that he saw that the poor, half-starved children were supplied with food.

It must have been the event of their lives to attend his schools. Referring to the 'eighties and 'nineties of the nineteenth century as *bad* old days, Mr. Ben Turner, President of the National Union of Textile Workers and late Chairman of the Trade Union Congress, wrote in a London news-

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paper, that 'if your parents were church or chapel people, the biggest event of your week was probably Sunday School.' What then must it have been to the poor children of Robert Raikes's day, a hundred years earlier, before the conditions of the poor were anything like so favourable?

A Methodist lady, Miss Sophia Cooke, who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. Samuel Bradburn, took an active part in helping Robert Raikes and the Rev. Thomas Stock to form the first four schools, and she actually 'marched with Robert Raikes at the head of his ragged troop on the first Sunday that the children were taken to church.' She was living at the time with her uncle, Alderman Weaver, who was a personal friend of Raikes.

Robert Raikes's first school was opened in July, 1780. Remember that these were not the children of the respectable artisan or the lower middle class, but were drawn from the very dregs of society. 'Poor Jo,' the vagrant little crossing-sweeper in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*, may be taken as a specimen of the type of child who attended those first four Sunday Schools in Gloucester city.

These were virtually the first Ragged Schools, though such institutions were not

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actually founded until the nineteenth century. Cranfield and John Pounds, the shoemaker of Portsmouth, had not yet come to the fore. Raikes's Sunday Schools and the Ragged Schools of a later period were both established for the same purpose—the moral reclamation and Christian instruction of the juvenile and adult necessitous poor.

The children who attended the first Sunday Schools came in the most pitiable rags imaginable, as already stated, and were half starved, under-nourished. The writer has before him a novel by Mrs. Frances Trollope, the mother of the still more famous novelist, Anthony Trollope. It is called *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, the Factory Boy*, and some of the old-fashioned woodcuts illustrating it shock one with the scenes of poverty they depict—one picture in particular, showing half a dozen tatterdemalions *scrambling for the contents of a pig's trough to satisfy their hunger*. Three other starved-looking boys are coming in through the gate, and one is calling to another, ' Make haste, young 'un, or they won't leave a turnip paring for us.'

Not one of the children has a jacket. All are in tattered, buttonless shirts, and equally disreputable, ragged trousers held up either by a wisp of string or a single brace—a band

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of coarse webbing or cloth passed over one shoulder to the opposite hip.

But as often as not these first poor Sunday-School children only had on a jacket and no shirt—a jacket which had belonged to the father and the tails of which trailed on the ground—or an old waistcoat over ragged trousers, if they were boys; and perhaps only an old cheap frock, which had been their mother's, with nothing on underneath, if they were girls. Stockings and shoes or even clogs were unknown.

I have not seen any mention of Robert Raikes supplying clothing to these poor children, except as prizes, but we may take it for granted that he did. It is just as likely, unhappily, that some of the wretched and more abandoned parents of these children sold his gifts of clothing, or at least pawned them for drink or food during the week, redeeming them in time for the following Sunday. Such behaviour on the part of the parents, however, would not embitter the tender, kindly heart of Robert Raikes, who knew that the children at any rate were blameless, and would only suffer if expelled from the school.

Gloucester, in Robert Raikes's day, was unpaved and undrained, although it was no

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worse in this respect than most other places, and the streets were very unsafe at night, being infested with rogues and vagabonds who would rob and even murder you as soon as look at you. There were no police—only inefficient, doddering old watchmen who were quite incapable of maintaining law and order. How much have we to thank the Sunday Schools for stamping out the crime and vice then so rampant?

We have not to thank the Government of that day, nor even of the next generation, for this great reform in public manners and morals, though perhaps in no country have benevolent individuals and associations of individuals contributed so largely to the establishment of permanent places of education.

'It is impossible,' says the *National Cyclopaedia of Useful Knowledge*, 'to consider a State well organized which shall not, to some degree and in some manner, superintend all places for education.'

Robert Raikes made his schools *Sunday Schools* for a three-fold reason. First, and perhaps mainly, because Sundays were the only days on which he could hope to get hold of the children just verging on or just entered upon their teens, as the rest of the week they

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were employed in the pin and sack factories, which were then and until quite recently the staple industries of Gloucester. There being no legislation as regarded education, or even regulating or forbidding the employment of child labour, the children of the poor of those 'bad' old days had barely started to walk and talk—had hardly ceased to be infants—when they were sent to work in factories, mills and workshops under conditions which were a disgrace to civilization or humanity. Most of the mills or factories were little better than the gaols—abodes of cruelty, oppression, and vice, ill-ventilated and insanitary, where the poor toiled unconscionably long hours for a miserable pittance, and, moreover, ran all manner of danger from unfenced machinery, &c. .

Where the children *could* attend on Saturday as well, the school was also opened on that day, but the prevalence of child labour utterly precluded its being opened on any other day of the week.

The second reason which led Robert Raikes to make his schools *Sunday Schools* was, of course, because he wished religious instruction to be given as well as secular—wanted the scholars to attend divine worship and grow up true Christian men and women. His third

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reason was because he realized that the best, indeed the only, way to make them respect and keep the Sabbath holy was to teach them moral restraint, as well as the great truths of the Gospel, on that day itself.

Robert Raikes's first school opened at ten a.m., but at first it was often half past ten before all the scholars had assembled and anything like real work could be attempted. Later, however, lessons began as early as 8 a.m.; and in a set of rules, printed in 1784 by Raikes and drawn up by the Rev. W. Ellis, chaplain to Earl Ducie, the hours of attendance were from eight to ten, followed by morning service at the local church, and from two to six.

Robert Raikes was frequently present, we are informed, at one or other of the first four schools. The boys and girls were kept apart and taught separately. Each teacher had only about twenty children under her, and these were divided into four classes, according to age or ability, each under a monitor or pupil teacher, called 'a leader.' Emulation among the scholars was encouraged by rewards of books, clothes, shoes, combs, &c.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THE SCHEME BECAME PUBLIC

THE schools speedily attracted attention through the marked improvement in the conduct and morals of the children attending them—the orderly way in which the scholars went to and from them and behaved on other occasions as well. ‘Instead of noise and riot, all was now tranquillity and peace on Sundays. There was no quarrelling, fighting, lying, swearing, and loitering around the streets.’

Lord Ducie, to whose chaplain we have already referred as drawing up a set of rules for Mr. Raikes, chancing to visit his Gloucestershire seat, Tortworth Castle, was so struck with the altered behaviour of the children he met with that he wrote to the paper about it and became one of the most generous patrons of Sunday Schools.

Encouraged by this public approbation of his enterprise, Robert Raikes published in the *Gloucester Journal* of November 3, 1783—three years and four months after the foundation of his first school in St. Catherine’s parish—a short notice of the success of the

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scheme. He did not mention his own name in connexion with it—laid no claim whatever to having started the idea or instituted the schools. So how any one can accuse him of being vainglorious, we utterly fail to see.

The notice began, 'Some of the clergy in different parts, bent on attempting reform, are establishing Sunday Schools, for rendering the Lord's Day subservient to the ends of instruction which has hitherto been prostituted to bad purposes.' It went on to say that farmers and others had formerly complained of the damage done by wild, unruly children on Sundays, but since the institution of these schools people had been astonished at the change wrought in the same children.

Greatly no doubt to his surprise, no less than to his joy, this brief notice was copied into the London papers, and awakened considerable attention. Numerous inquiries as to the system were addressed to him, in consequence; and a reply, which he sent to a Colonel Townley of Sheffield was published by the latter in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in the following year.

As Theodore Gerald Soares, the writer of the article on 'Sunday Schools' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, points out, 'the various letters in the *Gentleman's*

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Magazine still remain the most important sources of information regarding the beginning of the movement.'

In his letter to Colonel Townley, Robert Raikes wrote that the children walked to the church two by two.

'I am generally at church, and after service they all come round me to make their bow, and, if any animosities have arisen, to make their complaint. The great principle I inculcate is to be kind and good-natured to each other; not to provoke one another; to be dutiful to their parents; not to offend God by cursing and swearing; and such little plain precepts as all may comprehend.

'As my profession is that of a printer, I have printed a little book, which I give amongst them; and some friends of mine, subscribers to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, sometimes make me a present of a parcel of Bibles, Testaments, &c., which I distribute as rewards to the deserving.'

The number of children attending the schools, he stated, was between two hundred and three hundred, and increasing weekly. He added that he endeavoured to engage the interest of the clergy of his acquaintance in such schools, and that one of them (no doubt he referred to Mr. Stock) had entered upon the work with great fervour.

'It is botanizing in human nature. Often too, I have the satisfaction of receiving thanks from the parents for the reformation in their children. The going among them, doing them little kindnesses, distributing trifling rewards, and ingratiating my-

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self with them, I hear, have given me an ascendancy greater than I ever could have imagined ; for I am told by their mistresses that they are very much afraid of my displeasure. Many were at first deterred by (lack of) decent clothing, but I could not undertake to supply this defect. I have had the good luck to procure places for some that were deserving. The children are from six to twelve or fourteen. Boys and girls above that age who have been totally undisciplined are generally too refractory.'

Then on June 5, 1784, Raikes wrote, in answer to a Bradford inquiry :

'I have not had leisure to give the public an earlier account of my plan for a reform of the rising generation, by establishing Sunday Schools where poor children may be received on the Sunday and there engaged in learning to read and to repeat the Catechism or anything else that may be deemed proper to open their minds to a knowledge of their duty to God, their neighbours, and themselves.'

The letter then explained how the idea was first suggested to him by his visit to St. Catherine's Meadows and seeing how the small children behaved there, and that the scholars attended from ten to twelve, then went home, returning at one o'clock, when they were conducted to church, after which they repeated the Catechism until after five. He narrated that he went round to remonstrate with parents on the melancholy consequence that must ensue from so fatal a neglect of their children's morals ; that the parents

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alleged that their poverty rendered them incapable of cleaning and clothing their children fit to appear at school or church ; but that this objection was obviated by a remark that, if clad in a garb fit to appear in the streets, he would not think it improper for a school calculated to admit the poorest and most neglected.

‘ All that I required were clean faces, clean hands, and the hair combed. In other respects they were to come as their circumstances would admit . . .

‘ From this little sketch of the reformation that has taken place there is reason to hope that a general establishment of Sunday Schools would, in time, make some change in the morals of the (lower) class.’

In that same year, 1784, Mr. Church, a hemp and flax manufacturer employing many of the children who attended the Sunday Schools, happened to meet Mr. Raikes, and the latter asked whether he had noticed any alteration in the children.

‘ Sir,’ Mr. Church replied, ‘ the change could not have been more extraordinary, in my opinion, had they been transformed from the shape of wolves and tigers to that of men. They have become more tractable and obedient, and less quarrelsome and revengeful. In short, I never conceived that a reformation so singular could have been effected among the set of untutored beings I employ.’

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Also in 1784 the parish of St. Nicholas started two Sunday Schools, and some more gentlemen of Gloucester set up others. Furthermore, the Sunday School movement extended in that year to Yorkshire, where schools were opened at Leeds—soon to be attended by no fewer than 1,800 children—while at Stockport a most commodious building was begun for a Sunday School. It measured 132 feet by 56, and from a picture of it in W. F. Lloyd's *Sketch of the Life of Robert Raikes and a History of Sunday Schools*, published in 1826, it would seem to have *four floors*.

Robert Raikes wrote gleefully, that a Sunday School was to be opened in the Forest of Dean among the colliers—'a most savage race,' as he truly described them.

CHAPTER X

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY

WITH the publicity acquired through Robert Raikes's notice in his newspaper, the Sunday School movement indeed spread rapidly, similar schools to his springing up everywhere, as other charitable people followed his example and instituted them. Another great pioneer of the movement was Mr. William Fox, the founder of the Sunday School Society, known later as the Sunday School Union.

He was a London merchant born in 1736 and therefore a year younger than Robert Raikes. A son of the renter of the Clapton Manor Estate in Gloucestershire, he had become lord of the manor, moved to the metropolis, and entered upon a large business as a draper and mercer in Leadenhall Street. At Clapton, which must not be confused with the London suburb of the same name, he was conspicuous for his benevolence, like Raikes, 'not only clothing all the poor of the parish—men, women, and children—but founding a free *day school*.'

Learning of Raikes's Sunday Schools, he

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wrote to the latter, stating ' that, long before the establishment of the Sunday Schools he had designed a system of universal education, but had met with little support from the clergy and laity, who were alarmed by the magnitude of the undertaking.' He had also vainly attempted to bring about his scheme by the aid of members of both Houses of Parliament.

Impressed with Raikes's plan and considering it more practicable than his own, he enlisted the sympathies of Jonas Hanway, the famous traveller, philanthropist, and Russian merchant, whose published travels in Russia and Persia were much read. Hanway was made a commissioner of the Navy, and the Marine Society and the Magdalen Charity owe their establishment mainly to him. He was also, after Raikes and Fox, one of the great promoters of Sunday Schools. In 1786 he wrote a *Comprehensive View of Sunday Schools*.

Another noted philanthropist approached by Fox was Henry Thornton, born in 1760 and therefore only in his twenty-fifth year at the time. He was a great friend of the poet, Cowper, who describes him in his poem of 'Charity.' Cowper himself, by the way, declared that he could 'think of no nobler means than the Sunday School by which

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a reformation of the lower classes could be effected.'

Along with these two noble gentlemen and others, William Fox called a meeting at the King's Head Tavern, in the Poultry, London, on August 16, 1785, when it was decided to form 'a society for the establishment and support of Sunday Schools throughout Great Britain.' Fox's own original plan, which, as stated, he had relinquished for Raikes's as the latter was more practicable, was *for the gratuitous education of the poor*, thus anticipating, as W. H. Groser points out in *A Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, by nearly a century, the Board Schools of our fathers' day, and now superseded by the Council Schools of the present generation.

Needless to say, Robert Raikes warmly supported the Society, which voted a large sum for the payment of teachers in the schools, and comprised governors and a committee of twenty-four members. Hanway, Thornton, and Thomas Raikes, Robert's brother, who lived in London, were on the original committee, the members of which were chosen equally from the Church of England and the various bodies of Dissenters. The Earl of Salisbury was elected President, and Robert Raikes vice-president.

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A public meeting was held in London on August 30, in the same year, when Bishop Porteous and Henry Thornton promised to exert themselves to the utmost to start Sunday Schools. An urgent appeal for lay helpers was well responded to at the meeting.

In a letter Fox wrote to Robert Raikes, dated September 5, 1785, he added the following postscript :

‘N.B. The fire which you had the honour to light up in Gloucester, having now reached the metropolis, will I trust, never be extinguished but with the ignorance of every individual throughout the kingdom.’

Cowper, the poet, wrote from Olney, in Buckinghamshire, to the Rev. John Newton, on September 24 :

‘Heathenish parents can only bring up heathenish children, an assertion nowhere oftener or more clearly illustrated than at Olney, where children of seven years of age infest the streets every evening with curses and with songs to which it would be unseemly to give their proper epithet. . . . It is therefore, doubtless, an act of the greatest charity to snatch them out of such hands (meaning the hands of their own heathenish parents) before the inveteracy of the evil shall have made it desperate.’

Prior to the foundation of the Sunday

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School Society by William Fox, the first Sunday School in London had been set up by the Rev. Rowland Hill at the old Surrey Chapel, Blackfriars Road, on June 8, 1785, but the school did not actually begin until a year later.

CHAPTER XI

THE FESTIVAL AT PAINSWICK

AT Painswick, a small town between five and six miles south-east of Gloucester, an annual festival was held on the last Sunday in September. When this date was approaching in 1786, Mr. Webb, of Ebworth, a most earnest young worker for Sunday Schools in the neighbourhood, suggested to Robert Raikes that they should seize the opportunity of such a large assemblage 'to divert the attention of the vulgar' to the benefit of the newly formed schools. Raikes accordingly persuaded his friend, Dr. Samuel Glasse, to preach a special sermon on behalf of the schools in the church—an ancient building with a tower and spire. The town itself stands on the southern acclivity of Sponebed Hill.

Dr. Glasse at the time was rector of Wanstead, Essex; he had previously been vicar of Epsom.

The festival was usually attended with all kinds of disorder, of which drunkenness was about the least. On this occasion, however,

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Robert Raikes, through his paper and by means probably of printed leaflets, distributed broadcast, 'invited the people to witness a novel sight' and also to come and hear Dr. Glasse preach upon the organization of Sunday Schools.

The day came—Sunday, September 24, 1786—and the people flocked from all parts, to see the Sunday School children, to the number of 331, drawn up in ranks around the churchyard. The church was invaded by such a crowd that 'the galleries and aisles were thronged like a playhouse,' for the sight of the children, says Webster, deeply interested the people, all being so clean and orderly, when every one was so used to seeing them in a neglected state.

A collection was taken for the benefit of the Sunday Schools, and Robert Raikes, who expected at most from such a motley and lower-class congregation, chiefly farmers and artisans, £24 or £25, tells us that his 'astonishment was great' at receiving £57.

A carpenter, he afterwards wrote, put a guinea in the plate and then brought four more guineas to Mr. Webb after the service, saying that he did not like to put them also in the plate as it would have seemed ostentatious for a man in his position. An old man

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of eighty years of age, stopping Mr. Raikes later, said to him :

‘ Oh, sir, that I should live to see this day when poor children are thus befriended ! ’

The Rev. Thomas Stock preached in the afternoon, when the collection was not so good ; which of course, was to be expected.

Dr. Glasse’s text was most happily chosen. It was from Deuteronomy, xxxi., verses 12 and 13—‘ Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and the stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law : And that their children, which have not known anything may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.’

The sermon was published in the same year by Dr. Glasse in London, quarto size, under the title of ‘ The Piety, Wisdom, and Policy of Promoting Sunday Schools.’ Before we take our leave of the estimable Mr. Webb, whom we shall not meet again in these pages, let me say that he also proposed to Raikes that, in order to relieve the parish from the necessity of clothing them, the children who were earning should bring a penny every

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Sunday towards their clothing, and have the penny doubled.

This idea was adopted, with the result that £36 was collected in a year, and it 'had an admirable effect,' many of the poor ragged children being better clothed, and thrift being encouraged among them.

The story is recorded that a gentleman, seeing two Sunday scholars together, one ragged and the other quite respectably dressed, asked the better-clad lad the reason for it. 'Oh,' replied the boy, 'the reason why he is not so well-dressed as *me* is because he is not in our parish, and they don't take a penny a week to the Clothing Fund and get it doubled in his school, like we do in ours.'

Already too, in January, 1786, the Rev. Dr. Kay, almoner to the Queen and Arch-deacon of Nottingham, had praised the movement; and on May 18, 1786, Sunday Schools were opened at Brentford—mainly through the efforts of Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, a famous authoress, who wrote works chiefly for young people and at one time carried on the *Family Magazine*.

CHAPTER XII

GEORGE III. AND HIS QUEEN INTERESTED

THE Methodists from the very first welcomed the movement. They founded Sunday Schools at Chester and Bolton in 1785. John Wesley, visiting Bolton shortly afterwards, highly praised the singing of the Bolton scholars.

He expressed the conviction that the Sunday Schools would prove 'nurseries for Christians,' and in 1787, wrote: 'These schools will be a great means of reviving religion throughout the kingdom. I wonder Satan has not sent out some able champion against them.' Then in the following year, 1788, he penned these lines: 'I verily think these schools are one of the noblest specimens of charity which have been set afoot since the time of William the Conqueror.'

Returning to the year 1786, Dr. Glasse in a note stated that 200,000 children were already being taught in England—in the Sunday Schools only, of course; for there were no other schools for the poor. On

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November 19 in that same year, 1786, Queen Charlotte, deciding to establish Sunday Schools at Windsor, sent for Mrs. Sarah Trimmer, to consult as to how she should go about it.

Mrs. Trimmer's interview with the Queen was of two hours' duration ; and immediately after it, and as the result of it, Mrs. Trimmer published in that year a book treating of the promotion and management of Sunday Schools and entitled *The Economy of Charity*. The work passed through three editions and was republished in 1801 in a revised and enlarged form.

We have just referred to what John Wesley thought of Sunday Schools, but, earlier than the references given, he had remarked in his *Journal*, on July 14, 1784, 'that he found these schools springing up wherever he went.' The letter he wrote about them in the following year was published in the *Arminian Magazine*, and, according to Leslie Stephen, the author of the account of Robert Raikes in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 'did much to encourage them among his followers.'

Bishop Porteous of Chester and Dr. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Salisbury, as well as the Bishop of Gloucester and other prelates of the Church of England, spoke in high

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approval of the movement ; and Mrs. Trimmer wrote in her diary : ‘ May the Queen’s pious design of establishing a Sunday School at Windsor be put in execution.’

Queen Charlotte proved as good as the purpose she had avowed to Mrs. Trimmer. On learning, about Christmas, 1786, that Robert Raikes was in London—probably on a visit to his brother, Thomas—she summoned him to Windsor Castle, expressing the desire ‘ to know by what accident a thought which promised so much benefit to the lower order of people was suggested to his mind.’

According to Jesse’s *Life of King George III*, it was the King himself who invited Robert Raikes to an audience with him at Windsor, and, on the strength of this, Raikes’s biographer, Webster, concluded that *both* their Majesties were present at the interview, which lasted over an hour. But no other authority, so far as I know, alleges that the King saw Raikes, who is generally supposed to have spoken only with Queen Charlotte. With his usual modesty and lack of self-conceit or vainglory, Raikes himself made no mention of this memorable interview in his paper, but he briefly refers to it in a letter to the Rev. Bowen Thickens of Ross, Herefordshire, on June 17, 1788.

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Webster tells us that Raikes 'explained to their Majesties the object he had in view, and the principle on which he acted ; they both took a deep interest in the work.'

Following on that interview, Queen Charlotte again sent for Mrs. Trimmer, to whom 'she spoke favourably of the plan'; and with her Majesty's support Mrs. Trimmer started other Sunday Schools, including that at Brentford, which certainly was visited by the King himself. Mrs. Trimmer wrote in her diary : 'He (the King) won the hearts of the children by his kind and condescending behaviour. A general joy prevails among the conductors of Sunday Schools.'

In 1786, the Gloucestershire magistrates at the Easter Quarter Sessions, passed a unanimous vote, that 'the benefit of Sunday Schools to the morals of the rising generation is too evident not to merit the recognition of the Bench and the thanks of the community to the gentlemen instrumental in promoting them.' The great Adam Smith, father of the science of political economy and author of the *Wealth of Nations*, declared in 1787, according to the same authority (Gregory) that 'no plan so simple and promising for the improvement of manners had been devised since the days of the Apostles.'

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Madame D'Arblay, who had made a great sensation when quite young and unmarried, under her maiden name of Frances Burney, with her novel *Evelina*, which won her the friendship of Dr. Johnson, left a *Diary* published after her death. It gives a most graphic and important record of the period. In July, 1786, she was appointed one of the Dressers or Keepers of the Robes to Queen Charlotte, and she tells us under July 19, 1788, that in that year, on the King paying a visit on account of his failing health to Cheltenham, she was sent by the Queen to Gloucester to interview Robert Raikes.

She was most hospitably received by the family; but she says that, although she 'regarded him with reverence,' she thought him 'rather vain and voluble.' She goes on to say that he was 'a very principal man in all the benevolent institutions of the town, including an infirmary and a model prison in course of construction, and he heard with rapture that the Queen would be interested in his work.'

Madame D'Arblay referred to Mrs. Raikes as 'a quiet and unpretending woman.' She called Raikes's daughters, however, 'a common sort of country misses.' Raikes and his family conducted their clever visitor over the

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gaol, and he mentioned that he lost no opportunity of drawing attention to the evils of drink and idleness in his paper.

Gregory and other biographers hold that Madame D'Arblay was unjust to Robert Raikes, and that what she regarded as vanity and volubility were simply overflowing good spirits, the natural delight of a man over the success of a movement which he had started and to which he had given so much time and attention, and the possible over-eagerness of a host, unaccustomed to receiving great people, to please and honour his guest.

Later, Robert Raikes was visited by a still greater personage—in the world's eyes at any rate—than even the clever and eminent Miss Burney, namely Prince William, Duke of Gloucester, nephew of King George III.

Hannah Moore, another famous authoress of the time, who was living at Clifton, near Bristol, followed Mrs. Trimmer's example, being a writer on much the same lines, and started Sunday Schools on her own initiative in Somersetshire in 1789. Most of her works were of a religious character and highly successful: she is reported to have earned £30,000 by her writings.

At a general meeting of the Sunday School Society on July 11, 1788, the following

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resolution was passed unanimously : ‘ that, in consideration of the zeal and merits of Robert Raikes, esquire, of Gloucester, who may be considered as the original founder, as well as a liberal promoter, of Sunday Schools, he be admitted an honorary member of this Society.’

CHAPTER XIII

AMAZING SUCCESS OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

AN article appeared in the *European Magazine* of November, 1788, giving a portrait of Raikes with an account of his proceedings. Up to that time the Sunday School movement was strictly confined to England, but in 1789 it spread into Wales, and shortly afterwards into Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, as well as some of the continental Protestant countries.

The Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala, a Welsh preacher and writer, born in 1755, was the pioneer of education in his native country, as he had already been of the Methodist movement. He established what were called 'circulating schools' in North Wales. He set up a school first of all in one village, or town, and then, in from six to nine months, when the children could read their Bibles in Welsh, he moved his school to another locality.

His Sunday Schools were attended by adults as well as children, and after a time, 'their growth, conducted by gratuitous teachers'—a new innovation as regarded

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Sunday Schools—‘ made less necessary the circulating schools, which were expensive and difficult to maintain.’

The same authority goes on to say that ‘ before long associations of the different Sunday Schools were collected and catechized in some central place, and Charles could point with just pride to assemblies so great no buildings would hold them, gathered together in the open air. In 1791 a great “revival” radiated from Bala through North Wales as the result of Charles’s Sunday Schools.’

Previous to 1804, such was the neglect of religion in Wales by the Establishment, *Cassell’s Illustrated History of England* tells us, that ‘ there was scarcely a clergyman of the Church of England in the Principality who was a native, or could preach in Welsh. The capability of a minister to make himself understood by his parishioners had been totally disregarded by those who had the presentation to livings; the exercise of patronage had alone been cared for; the souls of people went for nothing. The Rev. Thomas Charles . . . found not a single Bible in the parish, and, on extending his inquiries, he scarcely found a Bible in Wales. He made this fact known to the public, in an appeal for Welsh Bibles, and for this appeal and the

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attendant exposure of the clerical neglect, he was dismissed from his living, and could find no bishop who would license him to preach in any other parish. But his truly Christian act had excited the attention of the religious public, and had the immediate effect of establishing the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804—an association which grew to such vast dimensions and has produced such admirable results.'

Mr. Soares, the writer on 'Sunday Schools' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, truly states that, if the catechizing of children had not been so neglected by ministers in England and Wales, there might never have been a Sunday School. 'Thus,' says he, 'the Scottish clergy, who were more successful in the training of children, regarded the new institution as altogether superfluous.' Even up to 1851 there was not so much activity in Scotland as in England, and for a long time the movement in the former country was confined to 'sporadic efforts.' In 1796, however—sixteen years after Robert Raikes started his first school—there was organized the 'Edinburgh *Gratis* Sabbath School Society,' which established Sunday *evening* schools, and similar societies were afterwards formed at Aberdeen, Glasgow, and Paisley.

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It was not until 1810 that an Irish Society was established at Dublin, although the London Hibernian Society was founded in 1806. As regards America, a First Day or Sunday School Society was established at Philadelphia in 1791. It was undenominational in character and philanthropic in purpose, and Mr. Soares, the authority above quoted, states that the visit of Mr. Albert May of London in 1811 greatly stimulated interest in Sunday School organization, the American Sunday School Union growing out of the various other associations in 1824.

‘It was not in America primarily (though it was to some extent) a school held on Sunday for illiterate children who could not be instructed on week days,’ adds Mr. Soares, ‘but rather a school conducted by the Church for religious instruction on the day set apart for that purpose. Thus from the beginning the Sunday School in America was more closely related to the Church than for a long time in England.’

The Father of Sunday Schools in America was Francis Asbury, the patriarch of Methodism in the New World. He established the first American Sunday School in Hanover County, Virginia, as early as 1786; and in 1790 the Methodist Conference opened Sunday

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Schools for *black* children as well as white.

In Asia, a Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. W. M. Harvard, himself a Sunday School boy, introduced the first Sunday School in 1815 in the *Pettah*, or native village, of Colombo, Ceylon ; and the second school was formed by Baptist missionaries at Serampore or Serampur, in the Hooghly district of Bengal, India.

Reverting once more to England, we learn that within eight months of the meeting called by William Fox and his co-operators in the Poultry, London, the Sunday School Society had established thirty schools, containing 1,110 scholars, and by January, 1787, these had increased to 147 schools with 7,242 children ; as also that the movement was being warmly supported by the illustrious slavery abolitionists, William Wilberforce and Granville Sharp.

It was the latter gentleman who founded the colony of Sierra Leone.

We read, too, in W. E. A. Axon's account of Hannah Ball, the friend of Wesley, in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, that at that period Wesleyans attended the parish churches as well as their own separate meetings, and that Hannah Ball, who, had anticipated Raikes by opening a Sunday School at High

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Wycombe in 1789, ' was in the habit of taking the school children with her.' She died in 1792, whereupon the school was continued by her sister Anne.

' At the funeral of Mrs. Ball, a relative, the Rev. W. B. Williams observed that if any Arminians entered heaven the angels would cease to sing. Anne Ball arose in her place, and, gathering her little flock around her marched out of the church, which she never re-entered. The little Sunday School was re-organized in 1801, and is still in existence.'

CHAPTER XIV

RAIKES'S FAMILY LIFE

ROBERT RAIKES promoted the Sunday School and educational movement not merely with his newspaper and on the platform. His printing establishment published books for Sunday Schools. He issued the *Elements of English Grammar*, by G. N. Ussher, at the price of 1s. 6d., and in 1794 he published the *Sunday Scholar's Companion*, a booklet four inches square and consisting of 120 pages.

He was very happy in his domestic relations, and we are told by Gregory that he 'found one of the greatest comforts of his declining years in the society of his children.' He had two sons and six daughters.

The eldest son, Robert Napier, was born on November 3, 1783—the self-same day on which his father gave such momentous publicity in the *Gloucester Journal* to the Sunday School system. He was trained for the Church. The second son, William Henley, became a colonel in the Guards. The six daughters were Anne, Mary, Albinia, Eleanor, Charlotte, and Caroline. A seventh daughter,

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named Martha, born between Eleanor and Charlotte, seems to have died in infancy.

'We all knew Mrs. Raikes to be a lady, as an admiral's sister,' James Whitehead, the office boy in Mr. Raikes's employ on the *Gloucester Journal*, and who often, with his brother, did odd jobs in the house in Bell Lane, told a biographer of Robert Raikes later. She was 'very pettish, but very good, and she kept the maids a long time and was most charitable,' the same authority stated. The family kept three maids and a footman, and Whitehead or his brother often helped the footman to clean the plate in the butler's pantry. They did not keep a butler.

Owing to Mrs. Raikes being an admiral's sister, they had frequent visitors in the shape of naval officers, and in 1796 the eldest daughter, Anne, married Captain Sir Thomas Boulden Thompson, Knight. Two years later, at the famous battle of the Nile or Aboukir Bay, Captain Thompson, in the *Leander*, of fifty guns, broke the line of the enemy and 'anchored in such a manner athwart the hawse of the *Franklin* (one of the French ships) as to be able to rake her and the *Orient* too.' (See *British Battles on Land and Sea*, Vol. II., page 267.)

The *Orient* was a mighty three-decker of

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120 guns and the flagship of the French admiral, Brueys, and she had just terribly worsted our *Bellerophon* (the historic 'Bully-ruffian'), the weight of ball from her lower deck being alone equal to the whole of the *Bellerophon's* broadside. As to the *Franklin* (named after the American scientist, philosopher, and statesman, Benjamin Franklin), she was Admiral Blanquet's ship, carried eighty guns, and was the fifth vessel in the French line. The *Bellerophon* had drifted helplessly to leeward, out of action, with nearly 200 of her crew killed or wounded and her masts and cables shot away. Her place had been taken by the *Swiftsure*, supported by the *Alexander*; and, now assailed by the *Leander*, Captain Thompson's ship, as well, the *Orient* took fire and blew up, Admiral Brueys being killed.

'Many of her crew stood the danger to the last, and continued to fire from her lower tier of guns while the ship was a mass of flame overhead. A silence that seemed awful followed this tremendous explosion. The firing, as if by mutual consent, instantly ceased on both sides,' says the historian James Grant, in *British Battles on Land and Sea*. 'Seventy of her crew were saved by our boats; but among the many who perished (she entered

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the action with 1,010 officers and men) were her captain Casabianca, and his son, a boy only ten years old. She had on board the plunder of Malta, amounting to £600,000 sterling.'

Mrs. Hemans, the poetess, has commemorated for all time the self-sacrificing heroism of Casabianca's son, that boy of ten years of age, who, having received orders, so survivors stated, from his father not to quit his post till he (his father) returned, perished in the flames or explosion rather than disobey his father's order. The father had been killed, but in the confusion the boy was not informed. Mrs. Hemans's well-known poem, beginning 'The boy stood on the burning deck,' is a fitting tribute to his bravery.

Captain Thompson, who had lost one arm, like Nelson, whom he sailed under, was mentioned in the despatches home and marked out for promotion. He was afterwards made an admiral and a baronet. In his honour and that of the great victory over French ambition and aggression, the Raikes kept open house for several days at their residence in Bell Lane, Gloucester, seventy to eighty persons being entertained daily.

Mrs. Raikes, it is said, was never happy unless the house was full of people, extra

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servants being engaged for special occasions. 'Open house' for nearly a week was also kept after the crowning naval victory of Trafalgar in 1805.

Mary, Robert Raikes's second daughter, also married a naval officer, Captain Henry Garrett, afterwards Admiral Garrett. Albinia, the third daughter, married Lieutenant-Colonel John Birch, of the Royal Westminster Volunteers ; Eleanor, her brother-in-law Admiral Garrett's brother, Daniel ; Charlotte, Commander William Stanley Clarke of the *True Briton*, an East Indiaman ; and Caroline, Captain Weller (afterwards General Weller-Ladbroke) of the 23rd Regiment of Light Dragoons.

The marriages took place almost yearly up to the year 1805.

Between the years 1786 and 1800, the Sunday School Society alone paid £4,000 to hired teachers, and about the latter year, or soon after, the girls who attended the Sunday Schools all wore straw hats with blue bands ; black hats with blue bands were given to all the boys. One who remembered those early schools stated, that wooden trays, filled with sand, were supplied to them on which to trace the letters of the alphabet, and then what they called ' battledores ' were used.

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These were thin pieces of wood, having printed on each side words of two or three syllables to commit to memory.

The Rev. Henry Todd, who became Arch-deacon Todd and a Chaplain-in-Ordinary to Queen Victoria, refers to one of these old-fashioned 'battledores' or children's horn-books. No doubt the children themselves bestowed the name of 'battledore' upon them from using them, more or less surreptitiously, in playing the well-known game of 'battledore and shuttlecock.'

From the 'battledore,' the children were advanced to a Spelling Book, and so on to Catechisms and learning by rote long passages of Scripture and hymns, which they repeated to the teacher, or learned to sing on Sunday. Dr. Watts's hymns were taught in Sunday Schools as early as 1785

CHAPTER XV

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION AND RAIKES'S DEATH

IN 1802, Robert Raikes was in his sixty-sixth year, and, on April 12, he retired from business, relinquishing control of the *Gloucester Journal* to Mr. D. Walker, late printer of the *Hereford Journal*. But he retained an interest in the paper and received a life annuity from it of £300. He wrote a farewell letter to the journal's readers.

The following year his friend and first collaborator in the Sunday School movement, the Rev. Thomas Stock died ; and that same year saw the formation of the Sunday School Union.

It was founded by a young man only twenty-five years of age, named William Brodie Gurney, who was appointed its first secretary. One of the causes of its establishment was that difficulties were arising over the payment of teachers, which was a heavy call on public charity, 'and it was now felt,' says Mr. William H. Groser, in a *Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, 'that a feder-

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ation of . . . voluntary workers, on a broad and catholic basis, was imperatively called for.'

Numerous young men and women had already come forward to give their services gratuitously, one of the earliest to do so, if not actually the first, being an assistant in a draper's shop—a young man who subsequently became the Rev. John Adey, minister of the Congregational Church, Bexley Heath, Kent.

Rowland Hill, whose son is famous as the founder of the penny postal system, presided over the first meeting of the Union, which was held in the schoolroom of the old Surrey Chapel, Blackfriars Road, London, and from its start the new institution went ahead rapidly, Auxiliary, London, and Country Unions being soon formed.

In 1805, a young Quaker named Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838) came into public notice as a zealous promoter of popular education by founding the British and Foreign School Society, the original name of which, however, was 'The Royal Lancastrian Institution, for Promoting the Education of the Children of the Poor,' and which was actually formed in 1808. Lancaster had originally opened a school in his father's house, in Southwark, in 1796, to instruct the children of the poor, and

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from this small beginning sprang the present popular day school system.

‘ He made but a small charge, which he remitted to those who were unable to pay, and often furnished food to the most destitute. His pupils numbered ninety before he was eighteen years old. Afterwards they came pouring upon him “ like flocks of sheep ” till in two years they reached 1,000. In order to meet the difficulty about teachers for so many, he divided them into classes, and adopted the monitorial system, which succeeded so well that he went through the country lecturing on the subject, establishing schools for the poor, raising funds for their support, and ultimately obtaining the patronage of royalty ’ *Cassell’s Illustrated History of England* (Vol. VII, p. 334).

In 1805 also, a work was published by Henry Teape for the Sunday School Union, entitled a *Plan for the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools*, to which is prefixed an Address to the Public on their Importance and Utility ; with an Appendix containing Ruled Forms for keeping a Methodical Account of the Scholars.

Then in 1811, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Bell, a Scotsman, successively rector of Swanage, master of Sherborne Hospital, and prebendary

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of Hereford and Westminster, founded the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the principles of the Established Church ; and from that date ' the work of popular education made considerable progress, chiefly through the agency of these two societies '—Bell's and Lancaster's, the latter being chiefly supported by Non-conformists.

But now, when his efforts had resulted in such a gigantic success and on the eve of the realization of his great dream of popular education, Robert Raikes died.

He passed away at his residence, Crypt House, in Bell Lane, Gloucester, on April 5, 1811, at the age of seventy-five. For some time previously he had been in declining health, but the end came suddenly. Only the day before he had been measured for a black silk waistcoat, and his brother was to have dined with him on that day.

He complained of a tendency to oppression in the chest, and the doctor, who was immediately summoned, declared his case hopeless, and in less than an hour he was dead.

CHAPTER XVI

MONUMENTS AND EULOGIES

ROBERT RAIKES had been left a very handsome fortune by his father, and he had added considerably to it, in spite of his many benefactions to various good causes, and particularly his Sunday Schools. He left all his property to his widow, his will directing that in case she predeceased him everything was to be divided equally among his children.

His widow, who moved shortly after his death from Bell Lane, survived him until 1828.

He was buried in the family vault in the crypt of St. Mary de Crypt, and a plain tablet near his grave is thus inscribed

‘ Sacred to the memory of ROBERT RAIKES, Esq., (late of this city), Founder of Sunday Schools, who departed this life April 5th, 1811, aged 75 years.’

‘ When the ear heard me, then it blessed me, and when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me, because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me ; and I caused the widow’s heart to sing for joy.’
Job XXIX. 11, 12, 13.

‘ Also ANNE RAIKES, relict, who died March 9th 1828, aged 85.’

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'The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'—1. John, i. 7.

'Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.'—Acts iv. 12.

The tablet consists of a marble slab of simple and orderly design, upon a dark slate back, and is situate near the roof.

At the east end of the south wall of the same church is another marble mural tablet in memory of his parents. It refers to his mother, who was twenty-five years younger than her husband, as 'a most excellent wife,' and bears an inscription in Latin respecting himself, which may be thus translated :

'Also of Robert, their eldest son, by whom Sabbath Schools were first instituted in this place and were also by his successful exertion and assiduity recommended to others.'

Robert Raikes left instructions that the Sunday School children should follow his remains to their last resting-place, and that each child who did so should receive a shilling and a plum-cake. These instructions were carried out ; and the girls who walked behind his coffin wore white bonnets of cheap muslin or calico, with black strings. As already stated, in his later years, he provided bonnets and hats for the scholars to wear at church on Sundays.

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Nevertheless, we are informed that his death and funeral caused no excitement or stir in Gloucester, awoke no interest whatsoever in his fellow townspeople, many of whom indeed considered him a 'Sabbath breaker' for holding his schools on that day and snubbed and ignored him, to his own great amusement but his wife's deep distress.

The chief friend of his latter years would seem to have been Sir George Paul, the governor of the new penitentiary, who entered largely into his schemes for the reclamation of the felons incarcerated there.

In the grounds of the house in Bell Lane, where he died, a Mr. Addison who resided there, caused a 'Memorial Tower' to be erected in 1864, bearing a tablet with a Latin inscription simply stating that the founder of Sunday Schools lived and died there, and was interred in St. Mary de Crypt church. The Centenary of the foundation of Sunday Schools was marked in the year 1880 by the erection of a hall in Gloucester, to be used as a Sunday School. It was called 'Raikes's Memorial Hall,' and a medallion of him was placed over the entrance.

He was 'a consistent and devoted member of the Church of England'—'an Evangelical, with a leaning towards mysticism,' according

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to the author of *Robert Raikes ; the Man and His Work*, Mr. J. Harris. He regularly attended Gloucester Cathedral, as well as his own parish church of St. Mary de Crypt. As Mr. William H. Groser, in his book, *A Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, points out, Mr. Harris 'has corrected the popular portraiture of Raikes, and has presented him, not as a merely amiable and benevolent citizen, who pitied juvenile ignorance and disorderliness and invented one simple remedy for curing them, but as a man in advance of his age—a broad-minded and far-seeing philanthropist of the best type. The Sunday School was one of the fruits of his maturer years.'

Webster, in his biography of Robert Raikes, says, 'Robert Raikes possessed a heart that glowed with ardour and benevolence for the good of mankind. His purse, pen, and influence were always employed in supporting every practical and useful plan, having for its object the promotion of the temporal and spiritual interests of his fellow-creatures. He was marked by indomitable perseverance and firmness of purpose, joined to a most lovable and amiable spirit : he felt it to be his highest happiness to add to the joy of others. In the management of refractory children, he was unequalled, acting on the principle that

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“a soft answer turneth away wrath.” By this means the magic of his words and looks were irresistible. Like the Master whom he served, he went about doing good. He left an example of what may be done by individual effort.’

His great motto, was ‘No man liveth to himself.’

The same authority is responsible for the statement that a gentleman, who resided near Gloucester, wrote: ‘The people of England, and the whole Christian Church, are more indebted to Robert Raikes than any other man who has existed since the Reformation,’ as also that ‘many ascribe the revival of the preaching of the Gospel, too, to the influence of Sunday School instruction.’

In 1809, two years before his death, he had personally superintended the education of 3,000 poor children, and had the great satisfaction of seeing ‘the good results of his philanthropic labours constantly before his eyes.’ Of him indeed, if of any man, might it be said, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.’ He is said to have asked Sir George Paul, the governor of the new penitentiary, whether any Sunday School boys were ever sent there, and to have been told ‘not one.’

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His youngest brother, the Rev. Richard Raikes, took a lively interest in his work, while devoting his own efforts more particularly to the reclamation of unfortunate women. A native of Gloucester years afterwards said of him, 'The good that man did, no one can tell.' His monument is in Gloucester Cathedral and is thus inscribed :

'To the memory of the Rev. Richard Raikes, A.M., a native of this city, eminent from his youth as a scholar, but still more eminent as a Christian. His unfeigned meekness, his unwearied benevolence, his unceasing labours, exemplifying that union of industry and humility which he regarded as peculiarly characteristic of the Christian life, &c.

'He died on September 5th, 1823, widely regretted.'

CHAPTER XVII

STORIES OF RAIKES

ROBERT RAIKES was not only genial and affable at all times, but merry and witty in company, especially at his own table. He is said to have attended to his newspaper business with 'ability, diligence, and care.' Nowhere, so far as we have been able to discover, did he seek notoriety or fame; on the contrary, he seems to have been most modest and to have kept himself in the background while endeavouring in every way to put forward and advance his scheme. He always readily gave the fullest credit to his co-workers.

A curate of his own church of St. Mary de Crypt, said in 1831—twenty years after his death—that 'excessive vanity was a predominant feature in his character.' Be that as it may, Mr. Leslie Stephen, the author of the account of him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, says, 'he seems to have been a thoroughly worthy man,' and Mr. Stephens went to many authorities, and further tells us that 'a large collection of

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notices from newspapers had been communicated to him by Mr. H. J. Taylor, of Gloucester.'

A portrait 'from the original in possession of Major-General James Raikes' was prefixed to his life by Gregory.

Many stories are told of him and his scholars. Mrs. H. B. Paull embodied most of these in a work entitled *Robert Raikes and His Scholars*. The book is written in story form, more or less imaginary dialogue being put into the mouths of the characters.

The following stories of him are generally vouched for as true.

On one occasion the mother of a little girl complained to him of the child's conduct. He tried to reason with the girl, but she remained sulky and obstinately refused, even in order to please him, to ask pardon of her mother. 'Then since you will not humble yourself, I must humble myself and make a beginning for you,' he said. He promptly knelt down before the mother and begged pardon of the latter in the girl's name. Upon that the child relented, burst into tears, and was reconciled to her mother.

Another story is that, as the scholars were going home from Sunday School one day, two of the boys had a quarrel, one struck the

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other, and they fought. Robert Raikes came upon them fighting, separated them, and made them, with all the other children, return with him to the school. There he asked the cause of the quarrel, and the boy who had struck the first blow said that the other lad had angered him in some way.

‘Harry, what would Jesus Christ have done when He was a boy?’ asked Mr. Raikes.

Without a word, the lad turned to the companion whom he had struck and, holding out his hand, said ‘I’m main sorry I hit you. Please forgive me.’ But the other boy was sulky and would not forgive or shake hands, until Robert Raikes put a somewhat similar question to him, when he eagerly seized his companion’s hand and the quarrel was made up.

A third story was published in narrative form by a Mr. Caswell of Birmingham, under the title of ‘The Sea Boy’s Grave.’ Mr. Caswell averred that he returned home from the West Indies aboard a ship, the cabin boy of which had been nicknamed by the sailors ‘Jack Raikes,’ because he had attended Robert Raikes’s Sunday School in Gloucester. One of the seamen, a rough, vile-mouthed fellow, was struck down with fever on the voyage, and ‘Jack Raikes’ nursed the man

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back to health, reading the Bible to him while he was convalescing and thus winning him to lead a better life. The ship was driven out of her course by a storm of some days' duration, and was wrecked off the Scottish coast.

' Jack Raikes,' and others of the crew put off from the wreck in one of the ship's boats, but it was overturned by the dreadful surf and all in it were drowned. Mr. Caswell tied himself to a spar and was washed ashore, and so lived to tell the tale. Later, the body of poor ' Jack Raikes ' was recovered from the sea, and his Bible was also found. Engraved on its brass clasps were the words ' The gift of Robert Raikes to J. R. Pelham, Gl'oster,' Pelham being the lad's proper name.

Mr. Caswell concluded his story with these words : ' His countenance wore a meek and heavenly expression, and, stooping down, I robbed his dear head of a little lock of auburn hair that lay upon his temple. " O Raikes ! " (thought I) " O Raikes this is one gem of purest light indeed ; still it is but one of the many thousand gems which shall encircle thy radiant head in that day when the Lord of Hosts shall make up His jewels ! *For they alone are had in everlasting memory whose deeds partake of heaven !* " '

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Another story is to the effect that the son of a journeyman currier, or leather-worker, of most drunken and dissipated habits, told Raikes one day that his father had left off going to the alehouse. Raikes met the father shortly afterwards and expressed the pleasure he felt at hearing this. 'Sir,' replied the man, 'I may thank you for it.' 'Nay, that is impossible,' said Mr. Raikes. 'I do not recollect that I ever spoke to you before.' 'No, sir,' the man rejoined, 'but the good instruction you gave my boy, he brings home to me, and it is that, sir, which has induced me to reform my life.'

Once at a 'treat' or feast that Raikes gave to his scholars, he saw one poor boy apparently unable to eat the good things put before him. 'Are you not hungry, my boy?' asked Mr. Raikes. 'I am very hungry, sir,' answered the boy, bursting into tears, 'I have not eaten anything for two days, but somehow now the food is before me and looks so nice, I cannot eat it.' Raikes knew that the boy was suffering from nausea brought on by starvation, and said to him, 'Try and just eat a little at first, my poor lad, and then a little more, and you'll soon get back your appetite.'

The lad obeyed, and a few minutes later,

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Mr. Raikes was well pleased to see the boy eating most heartily.

Another time, when entering the cathedral, he saw a soldier waiting just outside. 'Pleased to see you attending a place of worship, my man,' he said. 'I may thank you for that, sir,' the soldier answered. 'When a little boy I was one of your Sunday scholars. Then my father moved to Berkshire and apprenticed me to a shoemaker. I often used to think of you, sir, and your school. We moved up to London, where I joined the militia; and last night I came back to Gloucester with a deserter. Knowing that you generally went to the service at the cathedral on a Sunday, sir, I came and waited in the hope of once more seeing you.'

Although not a dandy by any manner of means, Robert Raikes was exceedingly fastidious and neat in his attire. He detested slovenliness; and in order to keep his shoes and stockings clean from mud, he had a crossing made between his house in Bell Lane and the office of his newspaper, and at night he would get his footman to walk in front of him with a lantern, so that he might avoid the puddles.

The Right Hon. Henry Cecil Raikes, M.P., Postmaster General of our fathers' day, was

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the great grandson of Thomas, Robert Raikes's younger brother, the Russia merchant in London and director of the Bank of England.

CHAPTER XVIII

PROGRESS OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS TO THEIR CENTENARY

THE same year that Robert Raikes died, the National Society started a training institution which, forty years later, that is in 1851, possessed five colleges, sending forth 270 teachers annually. In 1813, two years after his death, the Parliamentary returns recorded that there were in England and Wales nearly 20,000 Day Schools, with about 675,000 scholars—a proportion of 1 in 17 of the population, and also 5,463 Sunday Schools, with no fewer than 471,000 scholars, or 1 in 24 of the population.

One of the secretaries of the Sunday School Union, Mr. William Freeman Lloyd, who subsequently wrote a *Sketch of the Life of Robert Raikes*, published in 1813 a sixpenny quarterly called the *Sunday School Repository*, or *Teacher's Magazine*. It afterwards became a monthly, and, later still, changed its name to the *Union Magazine*. The first issue contained a memoir of Robert Raikes and an account of the origin of Sunday Schools.

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The Sunday School Union, in 1821, consisted of four metropolitan auxiliaries and sixty provincial unions. These, with the Society for Ireland and the Sabbath School Union of Scotland, comprised in all 4,000 schools with 36,000 teachers and 500,000 scholars. A couple of years later Infant Schools, for children below the ordinary Sunday-school age, were opened; and in 1825 there were 5,764 Sunday Schools, 666,535 scholars, and 62,447 teachers in Great Britain, while, including Ireland, the total number of Sunday Schools in the United Kingdom was 7,731, the number of teachers 75,284, and the number of scholars 838,027.

On September 14, 1831, the Sunday School celebrated its Jubilee or Fiftieth Anniversary—September 14 being Robert Raikes's birthday. It was at the suggestion of Mr. James Montgomery, the poet, who was a vice-president of the Sheffield Union, that that day was chosen.

Mr. Montgomery wrote two hymns for the occasion and Mrs. Gilbert a third, which, with a portrait of Robert Raikes, were engraved on steel for use at the Jubilee gatherings, medals being also struck. At that date it was announced that there were one and

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a quarter million scholars and 100,000 teachers in Great Britain.

Another popular Jubilee hymn was composed by Mr. Thomas Bilby, a former inspector of Sunday Schools in the West Indies and afterwards an inspector for the Home and Colonial Institute. It began 'Here we suffer grief and pain.'

An appeal was made to the public for £10,000, with which to erect new Sunday Schools and form Sunday School Missions. That sum did not materialize, but what was subscribed was devoted to building grants, thus providing better accommodation for teachers and scholars.

In the returns for 1833, the number of day schools and scholars was shown to have been nearly doubled, the proportion being one in eleven of the population. Sunday Schools, during the same period, were *trebled* both in number and the aggregate of children attending, 'while their proportion to the population was one in nine—the population having in the interval increased twenty-four per cent., the day scholars eighty-nine per cent. and the Sunday scholars 225 per cent.' (Cassell's *History*, Vol. VII., p. 334.)

Up to this time (1833), 'the work of education was conducted by private liberality,

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incited mainly by religious zeal, and acting through agencies of the two great societies, the British and the National. In that year the government came to their aid, and a grant of £20,000 a year continued to be made till 1839, which was shared between the two societies, representing two educational parties.' The British and Foreign School Society was chiefly supported by Nonconformists, and the National Society by the Church of England.

'It was thus made manifest,' wrote Horace Mann in his *Census of Education*, 1851, 'that the decisive tendency of fifty years of private educational enterprise had been to bring the education of the people into such a close connexion with religious bodies, that, for any prudent government it was impracticable either, on the one hand, to ignore the agency of such communities, or on the other, in applying to educational purposes funds raised by general taxation, to recognize the predominance of any particular section. . . . In 1839, the duty of administering these parliamentary funds was transferred from the treasury to the committee of privy council on education—not, however, without considerable opposition.'

The census of 1851 showed that the Church

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of England had thirty-four training colleges, and that there were six others, the Wesleyan Methodists, Congregationalists, Voluntary School Association, &c., each having one. There were 23,000 Sunday Schools and two and a quarter million scholars. Moreover, many mutual improvement societies had been established in connexion with Sunday Schools. The number of scholars was thus distributed between the different denominations—Established Church, 76,000 ; Free Church, 91,000 ; United Presbyterian Church, 54,000 ; Roman Catholics, 13,000 ; Independents, 12,000. In England Sunday scholars amounted to thirteen per cent., of the population ; in Scotland, ten per cent.

Queen Victoria, in that same year, 1851, visited Manchester, in company with her husband, Prince Albert, the Prince and Princess of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII. and Queen Alexandra, of noble memory), the Princess Royal, and the great Duke of Wellington, the victor of Waterloo, soldier and statesman, who died the following September. Three handsome public parks, called Queen's Park, Peel Park, and Phillip's Park had been formed by the inhabitants in 1846, munificent subscriptions being made for the purpose ; and in Peel Park the royal and

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illustrious visitors received an ovation from the various local Sunday Schools, assembled to the number of 70,000 teachers and scholars. The girls, all dressed in white, sat in rows one above another, and with the boys sang the National Anthem. It is reported that Queen Victoria was deeply moved and shed tears at the unexpected and hearty reception.

Then in 1853 the Sunday School Union celebrated its own Jubilee, the Lord Mayor of London, the Right Hon. Thomas Challis, M.P., who was the treasurer of the association, presiding at a breakfast held in the London Tavern, and Mr. Gurney, the founder of the Union, occupying the chair, at the evening meeting in Exeter Hall. A fund was inaugurated for the erection of a 'Jubilee Memorial Building,' which was opened at 56, Old Bailey, in October, 1856. In 1862 'a General Sunday School Convention' was held when delegates came from the United States, France, Switzerland, and other countries.

The number of Sunday Schools in England in 1873 was roughly calculated at 34,000 with two and a half million scholars and 300,000 teachers. Of these teachers it was computed that fully eighty per cent. had been scholars. At that time 'every church and chapel in the land was deemed incomplete

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that had not a Sunday School attached to it,' and how many teachers and scholars had become Ministers of the Gospel it was impossible to say.

In Painswick alone, we are told, there were, in that same year, 1873, between 500 and 600 children in the Church Sunday Schools within the three districts, besides those in the Sunday Schools of the various Nonconformist churches.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION

THE Centenary celebration in 1880 of the establishment of Sunday Schools, by Robert Raikes, was marked by a 'Second International Convention.' In that year Lord Shaftesbury unveiled at Gloucester the model of a statue of Raikes, which was intended to be placed in the cathedral. It represented Robert Raikes, with a Bible under his arm, leading and instructing a little child, and it was to have been chiselled in Sicilian marble. But it was never executed, as it was deemed incongruous to set up within the sacred edifice the figure of a man wearing a wig and knee-breeches. It might very well have been finished and placed elsewhere in the city, but it was not, and Gloucester is as yet without a statue of Robert Raikes.

It is in contemplation to present to the city a replica of a statue now being cast in Toronto, Canada, for the commemoration in 1930 of the 150th anniversary of the establishment of Raikes's first Sunday School.

Like his birth-place, the house where he

THE CENTENARY CELEBRATION

died—Crypt House, Bell Lane—is also as yet undistinguished by any memorial tablet. But the house in St. Catherine's Street in which he started his first school bears a tablet to that effect—the house was presented to the city by Sir. James Bruton in 1919—and a tablet also marks the house in Southgate Street, No. 38, where he lived for some years before moving to Bell Lane, and edited and published the *Gloucester Journal*.

Medals were given at the Centenary to all Sunday School children as a souvenir ; and a cup, with a portrait of Robert Raikes upon it and supposed to have been drunk from by the Earl of Shaftesbury on the occasion of his visit to Gloucester, was preserved by Mr. Fred Evans, the veteran ex-Cathedral chorister. He is presenting it to the Rev. F. R. Gillespy, headmaster of the King's School, which was formerly the Grammar School or College, where the Rev. Thomas Stock was headmaster. Mr. Evans, I am informed, believes that this cup dates farther back than the 1880 Centenary celebration, in which, by the way, several surviving Raikes's scholars are said to have taken part.

The Seventh Earl Shaftesbury, who unveiled the statue at Gloucester, devoted the best part of his life to movements for the

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amelioration of the condition of the poor. For over forty years he was President of the Ragged School Union, which was founded in 1844 under his leadership. He was also prominently identified with many other Christian associations, reformatories, refuges, &c., and was a Lord of the Admiralty, under Sir Robert Peel's premiership.

He was accompanied at the Raikes's Centenary celebration by Lord Herschell, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the Right Hon. William Henry Smith (the great statesman of newspaper and book-stall fame) and many other leading men of the time.

In that same Centenary year of 1880, a noble statue of Robert Raikes was erected upon the Thames Embankment, London. This statue is indeed a worthy memorial. It represents him standing bareheaded, in the wig and costume he was accustomed to wear, holding an open book in his left hand and indicating it with his right, as though impressing upon auditors the value of education and knowledge. The figure is a little larger than life size, and stands upon a plinth or square pedestal, with a moulded capital and cornice, erected on two steps.

The statue stands in Victoria Gardens, just at the bottom of Carting Lane, leading off the

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Strand. It is of bronze, and the pedestal of Cornish granite. The date when it was unveiled was Saturday, July 3, 1880, and the Earl of Shaftesbury performed the ceremony. Cleopatra's Needle is within sight of it.

The inscription upon the base is as follows :

ROBERT RAIKES

FOUNDER OF SUNDAY SCHOOLS

1780

‘This statue was erected under the direction of the Sunday School Union, by contributions from teachers and scholars of the Sunday Schools in Great Britain, July 1880.’

At the time of the controversy as to whether the statue of Raikes, unveiled by the Earl of Shaftesbury at Gloucester, was suitable for the cathedral, a local satirical paper, named the *Gloucestershire Wasp*, reproduced a drawing of the model, labelling it ‘The Raikes’ Progress.’ The famous painter, William Hogarth, (born 1697; died 1764) had satirized the follies and vices of his time in a series of engravings. One of these, consisting of eight pictures, ‘The Rake’s Progress,’ depicted the downfall of a wild, dissipated young man and is celebrated.

On June 26, in that Centenary year, a

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monument was also erected in the forecourt of the Unitarian Chapel, Essex Street, Strand, London, in honour of all the originators of the Sunday School movement. It was unveiled by Mr. Henry Richards, M.P. This memorial consisted of a life-size statue of a typical Sunday School boy, seated with the Bible open on his knees, and looking up for the teacher's explanation, on the side of the pedestal being inscribed the names of all the pioneers of Sunday Schools from the time of Cardinal Borromeo in the sixteenth century up to that of Raikes. The Rev. Theophilus Lindsey served this Essex Street chapel after he left the Church of England and became a Unitarian. He came from Middlewich in Cheshire and lived from 1723 to 1808, producing many literary works.

On the occasion also of the erection of this monument to the different founders of Sunday Schools and of the Centenary of Robert Raikes, a Mr. P. M. Eastman published a work entitled *Robert Raikes and Northamptonshire Sunday Schools*.

At the request of the Primate, Queen Victoria consented to be patroness of the Centenary, and delegates and other visitors came to participate in the celebrations from Canada and the United States, the Continent, India,

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Burma, South Africa, Australia, and even Persia, a week being devoted to meetings and other events. The result of a suggestion put forward was that courses of lectures to Sunday-school teachers were started.

CHAPTER XX.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS TO-DAY

IN 1886, the Sunday School Union sent a number of poor scholars to the seaside or country, and in the first week of July, 1889, co-operated with the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Union in holding another International Assembly, 437 delegates attending from Canada and the United States, 19 from Europe, and others from India, Australia, and China. A bazaar held realized well over £2,000. Shortly afterwards, 'Country Homes' were provided, through the benevolence of Mr. Passmore Edwards and others, for children and as a rest for lady teachers.

When Queen Victoria died in 1901, a wreath was sent to Windsor Castle 'in loving memory of the good Queen Mother, the Friend and Shepherdess of her Country's Children,' as 'the humble tribute of upwards of two millions of Sunday scholars and two hundred thousand teachers in Sunday Schools of Great Britain and the Colonies.'

Unhappily, it is alleged that with the great advances made in popular secular education,

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there has of late years been a falling off in Sunday School attendance everywhere. The Rev. A. M. Shand, Convener of the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr Committee on Religious Instruction of Youth, reported that 'the number of scholars on the Sunday School rolls in 1928 was 74,393, being a decrease of 1,576 compared with the previous year,' and it would seem that there has also been a decrease in England and Wales. This decline, alas, apparently also corresponds with many signs of a growing disregard for the Lord's Day, due, no doubt, to the ease and cheapness of transit to-day, thanks to motor-cars and motor-coaches. But it is probably only a passing phase—let us hope so at least—and it behoves those who have control of Sunday Schools to exert themselves the more to check this decline in attendance and the sad falling-off in other respects as well.

The Rev. G. E. Thorn, of Peckham, indeed, asserted on May 8, 1929, that over one million and a half Sunday scholars had been lost 'owing to cinemas and parks being open on Sundays.' He was speaking at the Assembly of the Congregational Union at the Memorial Hall, where he moved the resolution that the Union

'Views with grave alarm, and strongly

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protests against the proposed Sunday opening of theatres, because it would commercialize the day and deprive, directly, theatre employees, and indirectly, many others, of their inalienable right to the enjoyment of the advantages of Sunday, and thus defeat the beneficent purpose for which it was intended.'

The resolution was carried, and copies were to be sent to leaders of all political parties, to the Lord Chamberlain, and to the L.C.C.

At a special meeting of the Council of the National Sunday School Union, held on Thursday, March 15, 1928, Sunday School attendance was discussed, and the Rev. Carey Bonner, the General Secretary, 'affirmed that decrease was a reality, the loss recorded by twelve of the largest Free Churches between 1901 and 1925 being 577,105, but that over the same period the birth rate had also declined by 235,000. Decrease was the symptom of a national condition, to which growing disregard of Sunday observance, betting and gambling, and the lack of parental control and responsibility were contributing factors.' In a resolution unanimously adopted, the Council urged all affiliated Unions to press upon their schools the use of the Union's 'transfer system' when scholars were leaving one district for another, canvassing for new

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scholars, endeavouring in every way to make the Sunday School more central in the work of the individual church with which it was connected, and other suggested remedies.

The Union's grand summary of statistics for 1927, gave the number of affiliated unions in England and Wales as 332, the number of schools as 8,575, the number of teachers and officers as 188,111, and the number of scholars as 1,600,714. In Scotland there were 1,508 schools, 26,853 teachers and officers, and 231,261 scholars; in the Dominions, four Unions, 856 schools, 6,707 teachers and officers, 66,436 scholars; in India, 16,936 schools, 47,288 teachers and officers, and 589,386 scholars. These with Ireland, in which there were only two schools, 40 teachers and officers, and 289 scholars, made up a total of 336 Unions, 27,877 schools, 268,999 teachers and officers, and 2,488,086 scholars.

World Sunday School Membership, 1928 :

GRAND DIVISIONS	No. of S.S.	No. Officers and Teachers	No. Pupils	Total Enrolment
North America	195,343	2,459,799	17,510,830	19,976,829
Central America	381	1,832	19,098	30,930
South America	2,976	11,895	159,160	170,855
West Indies	1,930	17,364	171,330	188,694
Europe	90,621	854,905	8,462,845	9,317,750
Asia	37,427	96,564	1,470,818	1,567,382
Africa	13,148	63,477	726,181	789,658
Malaysia	1,422	8,161	100,463	108,624
Australasia and Oceania.....	12,898	89,720	790,710	880,430
1928 GRAND TOTALS	356,146	3,603,517	29,411,435	33,014,952
1924 Glasgow Convention				
Totals	347,001	3,520,192	29,157,419	32,677,611
1924-1928 Increase.....	9,145	83,325	254,016	337,341

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Meetings of the World's Sunday School Association General Executive from Europe and America were held at Heyst in 1928, and the reports from the fields cared for by the British Committee were most encouraging.

An establishment known as the ' St. Andrew Teacher Training Institute ' is doing good work in India, where towards the close 1927, through the efforts of the British Committee, ably assisted by a Ladies' Auxiliary from Scotland, a special lady missionary was added to the Secretariat, her particular sphere of service being the training of educated natives.

According also to the National Sunday School Union's Report for 1928, thirty-one new Sunday Schools have been opened in Victoria, Australia, embracing about a hundred teachers and nine hundred scholars, eight hundred of whom had never been in a Sunday School before. ' The scholars are children of pioneers, farmers, fishermen, miners, and mill workers.' There is a Supervisor of Kindergarten or Primary work, and a Normal College with lecturers, demonstrators and examiners, and ' one of the most important functions is the maintenance of the " Bush " Mission with travelling missionaries who go through the lonely hill country districts, holdings meetings, giving lantern

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lectures and assisting schools in those isolated regions.' In Queensland, various denominational unions prosecute a vigorous campaign in connexion with what is designated the 'Forward Sunday School Movement.'

New Zealand reports a total number of 150,000 scholars out of 250,000 young people. During the past few years, the Otago Council of Sunday Schools has 'inaugurated and maintained a remarkably fine School of Religious Education, with a staff of special lecturers and educational leaders.'

In Auckland and Wellington there are 30,000 Sunday scholars and 4,000 teachers, and there, too, there are travelling Missions in the 'back blocks' or outlying settlements.

In South Africa, it is stated that the Cape Sunday School Union holds five Daily Vacation Bible Schools two hours each morning for a week, in order to lay hold of the idle children and to use idle buildings, and the 'Pass It On' Department of the World's Sunday School Association distributes 'Lesson Helps' and other literature among teachers in poor districts.

The South African National Sunday School Association carries on its work among fifteen Unions with 190 schools.

CHAPTER XXI.

'NO FINALITY IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.'

'HAPPILY,' says Mr. Wm. H. Groser in his *Hundred Years' Work for the Children*, 'there is no finality in Sunday-school plans and methods'; and in a letter which he quotes in the same work, the Rev. W. F. Hook, subsequently Dean of Chichester, wrote to the Bishop of St. David's: 'The mainstay of religious education is to be found in our Sunday Schools.'

Mr. Groser writes: 'Every generation has its own way of doing its own work. We do not build houses, nor warm them, nor light them as did our fathers. . . . New times demand new fashions and this principle seems to hold even in the methods of bringing men to Christ. The solution of the much-discussed problem of how to reach the masses lies in the Sunday School.'

What Mr. Horace Mann wrote as far back as 1851† on the social influence of Sunday Schools is just as applicable to-day:

† *Census of Education.*

‘ NO FINALITY ’

‘ Intelligent familiarity with scriptural facts and doctrines must be gradually extending through the masses of society, and though, if tested *merely by attendance on religious co-ordinances* (the italics are ours, for the reference seems most appropriate at the present moment) much of this instruction may appear to be vain, yet doubtless in a thousand other ways, though imperceptible, the influence exerted in the Sunday School is more or less prolonged throughout the subsequent career, and mainly helps to bring about that increase of morality and deference to law on which from time to time our public writers dwell with much complacency. Indeed, it may be very fairly questioned whether Sunday-school instructors do not exercise an influence in moulding the religious mind of the community considerably more extensive and more potent than proceeds from all the pulpits in the land. But this extensive influence does not result exclusively from the mere instruction which is given. The position and the character of the teachers—members of the middle class—the evident disinterestedness of their gratuitous exertions, the personal attachment which not seldom binds a teacher to his pupils, and the friendly interest with which he often aids them in their secular career—all these, and many more *collateral* advantages of Sunday-schools, combine to give the system its extensive and benignant power. Much more, it is true, might be accomplished in this way than is effected, for the *capabilities* of Sunday-schools in this respect are almost boundless, but the actual and present efforts are of striking value. . . . Many schools sustain week evening classes. . . . Sick clubs, and provident clubs, and penny banks are frequently established in connexion with Sunday-schools. Excursions, too, and festivals in which the children and their teachers join in recreation, are now universal. Thus there is in some degree (although too

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small) a constant kindly intercourse between the different classes of society. . . . But in this department of its usefulness the Sunday School is yet but in its infancy, awaiting, probably, the time when ministers and influential members of the Church shall recognize its undeveloped power for good. . . . Both, therefore, as a necessary and effective institution for the spiritual culture of the young, and as a most important means of binding up in harmony the various orders of the people, Sunday Schools appear to their supporters to be worthy of the countenance and active aid of the highest intelligence of the Christian Church.'

Consequently, on the 150th anniversary of the founding of Sunday Schools by Robert Raikes, let us give that noble and disinterested benefactor of the human race his full meed of praise ; for, ' the great day alone will make manifest the successful results of Sunday Schools.' '*Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.*' (Matt. xxv. 40.)



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